

There is not now, nor has there been in the past, any better magazine "

PERIODICAL ROOM  
GENERAL LIBRARY  
UNIV. OF MICH.

JAN 14 1936

# THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE

EDITED BY  
LORD GORELL



JANUARY  
1936

	PAGE
CALENDAR .. .. .	E. G. 1
VENICE WHEN THE CENTURY BEGAN ..	Laura M. Ragg 2
PINE—FOR STURDINESS: A STORY OF JAPAN	Mona Gardner 17
LOVE: A POEM .. .. .	Raymond Murray 29
TO A WOMAN BURIED AT SEA .. .. .	I. Shipton 30
EAST IS EAST: I. ODDITIES AND COMMODITIES	
	Major C. S. Jarvis 31
THE UNWELCOME RETURN .. .. .	D. T. H. McLellan 42
AFTER-WORD: A POEM .. .. .	Willard R. Espy 50
KNIGHT'S MOVE: A STORY .. .. .	W. M. Letts 51
MICHAEL'S DAM .. .. .	Geoffrey Lapage 60
A MIDDLE-AGED POEM .. .. .	Freya Stark 62
WHY BIRDS SING: A RED INDIAN LEGEND	Grace Jackson 63
IN THE FRESHNESS OF THEIR YOUTH ..	J. S. Coltart 66
A TURKESTAN EXCURSION	Major G. V. B. Gillan, C.I.E. 73
'IFS' AND 'BUTS' .. .. .	The Hon. A. J. McGregor 86
TWO FISHERMEN: A STORY .. .. .	Henry Baerlein 91
THE LITTLE GHOST: A POEM .. .. .	Dolf Wyllarde 98
LITTLE GENERAL MONCK .. .. .	Oliver Warner 99
THE CAT OF BEN-A-LONE: A STORY ..	F. G. Turnbull 108
TALES OF A GUIDE: I. THE TALKING DOG	Thurstan Topham 118
THE RUNNING BROOKS .. .. .	.. .. . 124
LITERARY COMPETITION .. .. .	.. .. . 128

Written and Read in every  
Part of the World.



LONDON  
JOHN MURRAY  
50 Albemarle St. W.1



**N**EITHER WARS nor the world crises of the past twenty-one years have impeded the steady growth of British Insurance and the capital appreciation of British Insurance shares. The *Economist* Index shows that an investment of £1,000 in 1913, spread over the ordinary shares of twenty-four leading Insurance companies, would have appreciated by 30th September, 1935, to £4,379, a capital gain of £3,379. In addition, the investor would have received regular and increasing dividends throughout the whole period.

Over the past ten years the average return to the investor in dividends received and capital appreciation accrued on the shares of the companies included in the Trust of Insurance Shares is equivalent to a yield of over 11 per cent. *per annum*, free of income tax.

By the purchase of Units of the Trust the investor of moderate capital is now able to participate in this most stable and progressive of British industries.

## TRUST *of* INSURANCE SHARES

*An investment, free from personal liability in respect of uncalled capital, in thirty-one British Insurance companies. Insurance Units may be bought and sold through any Stockbroker or Bank. Price of Units (7th December, 1935) — 23s. 3d.*

TRUSTEES: WILLIAMS DEACON'S BANK LIMITED  
MANAGERS: TRUST OF INSURANCE SHARES LIMITED  
29 CORNHILL · LONDON · E.C.3. TEL.: MANSION HOUSE 3326

*Apply to Managing Director for Full Particulars.*





P  
Z



# THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE

EDITED BY  
LORD GORELL



JANUARY, 1936.

	PAGE
CALENDAR .. .. .	E. G. 1
VENICE WHEN THE CENTURY BEGAN ..	Laura M. Ragg 2
PINE—FOR STURDINESS: A STORY OF JAPAN	Mona Gardner 17
LOVE: A POEM .. .. .	Raymond Murray 29
TO A WOMAN BURIED AT SEA .. .. .	I. Shipton 30
EAST IS EAST: I. ODDITIES AND COMMODITIES	Major C. S. Jarvis 31
THE UNWELCOME RETURN .. .. .	D. T. H. McLellan 42
AFTER-WORD: A POEM .. .. .	Willard R. Espy 50
KNIGHT'S MOVE: A STORY.. .. .	W. M. Letts 51
MICHAEL'S DAM .. .. .	Geoffrey Lapage 60
A MIDDLE-AGED POEM .. .. .	Freya Stark 62
WHY BIRDS SING: A RED INDIAN LEGEND.	Grace Jackson 63
IN THE FRESHNESS OF THEIR YOUTH ..	J. S. Coltart 66
A TURKESTAN EXCURSION ..	Major G. V. B. Gillan, C.I.E. 73
'IFS' AND 'BUTS' .. .. .	The Hon. A. J. McGregor 86
TWO FISHERMEN: A STORY .. .. .	Henry Baerlein 91
THE LITTLE GHOST: A POEM .. .. .	Dolf Wyllarde 98
LITTLE GENERAL MONCK .. .. .	Oliver Warner 99
THE CAT OF BEN-A-LONE: A STORY ..	F. G. Turnbull 108
TALES OF A GUIDE: I. THE TALKING DOG	Thurstan Topham 118
THE RUNNING BROOKS .. .. .	124
LITERARY COMPETITION .. .. .	128



LONDON  
JOHN MURRAY  
50 Albemarle St., W.1.



NEW YORK: THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS CO., 131 VARICK STREET, N.Y.  
Published Monthly, price 1s. 6d. net. Annual Subscription, 20s., post free.

Entered as Second Class Matter March 15, 1929, at the Post Office, Boston, Mass., U.S.A.,  
under the Act of March 3, 1879, (Sec. 397, P. L. and R.).

All Rights Reserved.

vii

AN INCOME EXCEEDING

6%

WITH GUARANTEED SECURITY OF CAPITAL

#### THE INCOME

is derived from participations in proven and oil producing properties, which are operated by such Companies as SHELL PETROLEUM, STANDARD OIL, etc., from which Companies the Investor receives direct his income payable monthly.

THE INVESTOR  
HOLDS  
THE TITLE DEEDS  
which are registered in his  
name CONVEYING TO HIM  
DIRECT OWNERSHIP.

#### THE CAPITAL

is secured by a Single Premium fully paid CAPITAL REDEMPTION POLICY issued by leading British Insurance Companies which covers the whole of the investment at no extra cost to the Investor.

THE INVESTOR  
HOLDS  
THE REDEMPTION  
POLICY  
which is issued in his name.

*Full particulars from*

The Secretary,

**PROVED & PRODUCING PROPERTIES LTD**

7/8, PRINCES STREET,

LONDON, E.C.2.

Tel. : Metropolitan 4631.





THE  
**CORNHILL MAGAZINE.**

---

JANUARY 1936.

---

*CALENDAR.*

PASSES the sombre procession of the great months of Winter.

DECEMBER of the Hidden Jewel.

Unyielding JANUARY, ruthless to conceal the track of the Innocents.

Shrill FEBRUARY, whose high voice cries to Fierce MARCH to fulfil her great promise, for FEBRUARY hath prophetic eyes.

Fierce MARCH, Brave MARCH, stabbed with a million sharp green spears, pierced to the heart by clamorous resurrection, Great MARCH sweeps by.

Peaceful, gentle MAY and JUNE—the tears are shed—life laughs at APRIL's many-coloured bubbles, and MAY and JUNE transpose her airy beauties into the living ground and clothe her green with colour.

Passing JULY one moment stands holding in full adoring hands the great completion, offering of past joys and sorrows.

Burning AUGUST waits to give; glad, golden AUGUST, the great giver, the Reward of labour—toil crowned with good.

Clear-eyed SEPTEMBER learns to die. Between the glowing past and the dark hidden stress of future clear-eyed SEPTEMBER stands, looking at pain to be, and joy to be again, hearing the happy Fairy Feet. Slowly she dies, her pain she gives us in bright colour, scarlet of juices and the bright shrivelling gold.

OCTOBER the Shroud Maker, carrying all scattered hopes, the tiny empty cups, the flying seed, a brilliant shroud for great and small in which to sleep throughout the night, watched by the calm, grey eyes of Sentinel NOVEMBER, those eyes which watch till Dawn.

O Twelve Great Sounding Names of Mystery and Power.

E. G.

## VENICE WHEN THE CENTURY BEGAN.

BY LAURA M. RAGG.

As I pass in review my memories of Venice during the first decade of the present century I feel my temper approximating to that of Talleyrand, when he declared that only those who had lived under the *Ancien Régime* had tasted the quintessence of social delight. Life on the lagoons, during the halcyon pre-war period, seemed as easy and agreeable as the motion of the gondola which was an integral part of it. It had a peculiar unhurried charm, difficult to recapture in retrospect and impossible to convey in words.

No city in Italy exhibits fewer traces of post-war alteration than Venice: none has been more changed in spirit and social habits. The physical geography of the *Città nobilissima e singolare* resists the activities of the jerry-builder and the claims of increasing population; and where new dwellings have been erected a committee of experts has made skilful use of the few waste places at their disposal.<sup>1</sup>

Nor have mechanical inventions and the lust of speed entirely ousted more leisurely and human means of locomotion. Electric launches have indeed increased in number; but gondolas, the cabs of Venice, still wait for hire at every *traghetto* (ferry). There are, however, fewer smart private gondolas than of yore, when every foreigner who rented an apartment hired a gondolier, by the week or the month, with his boat. The boat being the stock-in-trade of the *barcaiolo*, and its appearance his testimonial, it was to his interest to keep it smart and sound; and the advantages of this sort of compact were so obvious I always wondered why the system was not extended to the chauffeurs and autos of other cities.

Increased wages on the one hand, and decreased incomes on the other, have to-day occasioned a certain amount of unemployment among the gondoliers: and even when a man has regular work at the new fixed rate of wages, his wife asserts that it is harder to

<sup>1</sup> A foundry at the close of the nineteenth century had converted the little island of St. Elena into a blot on the landscape: now a group of apartment houses fills inoffensively this valuable site. The squalid sheds and unsavoury fish stores which huddled at the end of the Zattere have been replaced by the imposing offices of the Italian Triestino Lloyd Company, whose steamers anchor in front of the building.

keep a family than in 'the good old days' of smaller earnings and cheaper commodities. Moreover, a slight contempt or mistrust of their hereditary calling has crept into the minds of the once proud and exclusive gondolier class; and it is said that a generation that was conscripted just when strength and technique were maturing have never been able to recapture a perfect facility with the oar, and fall short of the standards set up by their ancestors.

Parallel changes of outlook and habits appear among the leisured classes.

The patriarchal existence of large patrician families (the Venetians were always prolific) living in great *palazzi* called by names illustrious in the history of the Republic, coloured their social fabric and lent a peculiar *cachet* to their hospitality. It clothed their formal receptions with a curious, but pleasing, atmosphere of unreality. Leaving one's gondola in the darkness, traversing the dim stone water-entrance lighted by torches or lanterns held by liveried attendants, ascending the great staircase to the *piano nobile*, and entering the *sala* where the hostess received her guests, one felt like an actor in a beautifully staged pageant, or asked one's self if this were not a dream produced by an evening reading of an ancient chronicler.

The refreshments served—coffee, wine, ices, syrups and sweet cakes—tallied with those described by eighteenth-century visitors to Venice. They were traditional, uncriticised, exempt from innovations. Changed methods of illumination were disguised as much as possible. I remember but one costly reversion to the becoming radiance of wax candles; but their simulacra were cunningly affixed to chandeliers and gilded sconces: and if the light of electric bulbs was multiplied by innumerable mirrors, its garishness was absorbed by the milky patina of the old looking-glass, and by the sheen of the brocades stretched upon the walls. In one or two of the smaller rooms opening from the central *sala*, card-tables were set out: in others gilded chairs, brocade-covered settees, and rococo screens were arranged with a view to conversation. It needed but a small amount of imagination to transfer to such surroundings the gallants, *abbati* and *zentildonne* shown on the canvases of Guardi and Longhi.

The invasion of the French, the domination of the Austrians, had in fact occasioned no violent breach in the continuity of Venetian social life; whereas the ejection of 'useless mouths' after the catastrophe of Caporetto disrupted its entire fabric. Moreover, the English who returned after the great dispersal had one and all

suffered losses, sentimental and material. Their country houses had been ravaged by Austrian and English soldiery; their hastily packed Venetian movables had been damaged: their sense of pleasure and security had vanished. Many of them returned to England for good. To-day, while Venice attracts a cosmopolitan herd of tourists and bathers, and two or three of its English residents cling to it, it cannot be said to have an Anglo-American colony.

A writer in the *Gazetta di Venezia* in the autumn of 1929 bewailed that defunct entity. The colony and its splendid gestures could never, he asserted, be forgotten by the city in whose life 'it had participated through the creation of individual friendships and intellectual reciprocities.' Subsequent acquaintance with British colonies in other continental centres has made me realise that the esteem of the Venetians for the strangers in their midst, and the internal harmony of that foreign community, were created by the remarkable men and women who led and represented it.

Of these striking personalities the best known outside Venice, though precisely because of his connection with the city, was Horatio Brown. Scholars recognised the value of his researches in the Archives of the Republic: the general public was fascinated by the easy style with which he popularised them. But his literary works, save as attestations to his industrious habits and his lucidity of mind, gave no clue to his character; they conveyed no impression of his pawky humour, his shrewd common sense, his broad humanity, his consideration for the weaknesses of his fellow-men, his aloofness from their meanness; nor, steeped as they are in the atmosphere of the Adriatic, did they reveal the fact that their author remained essentially a Scottish laird.

His relations with his mother who lived with him were amusing and extremely characteristic. Both delighted in each other's verbal thrusts and parries, and Horatio would often repeat specimens of old Mrs. Brown's satirical reflections on himself.

To say he was a good son is to use an expression which she, with her detestation of banality and habit of taking him to task, would have execrated. Yet she must have known that he made her his first consideration, even to the point of remaining a bachelor for her sake. Not that his oldest friends ever pointed to a definite act of renunciation; but everyone felt that a young Mrs. Brown could not come upon the stage while old Mrs. Brown held it. And old Mrs. Brown was of tough physical and mental fibre, and declined to make her exit till her son had passed 'the middle of the pathway



of our life.' She was nearing eighty when she broke her thigh, through slipping on the grass of her Scottish garden while playing with a child. How Horatio ever got her back to Venice nobody ever knew. Henceforth she rarely left her sunny bed-sitting-room on an upper floor of Ca' Torresella, though occasionally she submitted to a descent in a carrying-chair to the study or the terrace. And at intervals she exercised a privilege she obviously prized, that of receiving her son's male guests on the Monday evenings which, when the century began, were a feature of social life in Venice.

In spring and autumn, when the city filled with travellers from the North, there were few who counted in literature or action who failed to appear in this masculine *salon*. In winter it became an intimate and friendly gathering; Mr. W. Hulton, Augustus Montalba, my husband and Prince Hohenlohe being perhaps the most faithful habitués. The Prince was then the possessor of the charming little red house with a garden on the Canalazzo, which during the War was assigned to Gabriele d'Annunzio. It was in Casetta Rossa that the poet-airman lay for weeks in semi-darkness, recovering from the misadventure which threatened him with total blindness.

After the war Horatio made no attempt to resume his pleasant, unostentatious hospitality. It was part of a tissue of habits torn by the death of his mother, by the departure of old friends and by his own ill-health. When we saw him for the last time, during a week's visit to Venice in the May of 1920, his loosening hold on life was so obvious that I regretted I had not brought our daughter—his godchild—to Venice that she might have said Hail and Farewell to one who had filled so large a place in our Venetian life.

It is perhaps because I so often saw them side by side as they processed towards the chancel of the English church, bearing the alms of the congregation, that my mind's eye associates the very unlike figures of Horatio Brown and Augustus Montalba. The Scotch laird with his ruddy countenance, muscular limbs and sturdy frame was at every point a contrast to the 'chubby lad,' as lovers of Strewel-Peter disrespectfully called Augustus, with his loose limbs, his black hair, dark eyes and Hebraic nose. In character, however, they had three features in common—affection for Venice, loyalty to kinsfolk and friends, and a strong sense of duty towards the British community.

All of us smiled indulgently at Augustus Montalba's eccentricities; few perhaps fully realised how numerous were his 'unre-

membered acts of kindness and of love.' He had a profound and delicate respect for his sisters' artistic gifts; and, reversing the order of most households, he strove to protect them from interruptions and deliver them from domestic worries. He left cards, delivered verbal invitations, made purchases, and even superintended or performed culinary operations. All the family had fastidious tastes and understood the niceties of cooking, and Augustus certainly viewed it as an art, and was a past master in it.

The family never gave luncheon-parties—the daylight hours of Clara and Hilda were consecrated to painting; but Augustus would sometimes invite a few friends to an alfresco meal on the Lido. He had an isolated *capanna* at what was, at that remote period, the quiet end of the shore; and there he spent hours in the solitude and cool air which his state of health—a condition which we should now call high blood pressure—appeared to demand. There the guests found a table laid and chairs arranged outside the hut; within, the host busied himself over a Primus stove. Attired in a white over-all and a cook's cap he brought out savoury messes; and, sitting down beside us, he both partook of the repast and explained how it was composed. I remember his superlative brussels sprouts, and his recipe for what he proudly called *Pêches Montalba*,—ripe peaches carefully peeled and steamed on tripods in a pan containing very little water. They were delicious eaten with sugar and a spot of curaçao.

The Montalbas' house was entered from Campo St. Agnese; but its *sala* looked on to the Zattere. In my recollection it seems continually flooded with warm afternoon light, and filled with guests of many nationalities. The family were excellent linguists; Italian, English, French, German and Swedish all came trippingly on their tongues. Clara, in a quite unstudied and artless fashion, was a first-rate *raconteuse*. She talked because she had something she wanted to communicate to individual listeners, not to impress them with her own cleverness; and her charm lay in her essential simplicity, her kindness, her vivacity and her sense of beauty. It was a sense expressed even in her calligraphy, which had the same sort of graceful lucidity, the same distinction without peculiarity, as her speech; and her notes—I treasure many of them—written with a quill and very black Indian ink, were a source of joy to their recipients. To amateur artists she was always ready to impart her own wisdom and enthusiasm. My husband retains a grateful memory of her discerning encouragement.

Early in the war years the Montalbas took refuge in a villa in Tuscany. When we met again in the house on the Zattere, Hilda was no more, and the youngest sister, Ellen, had become a hopeless invalid. Clara was too much occupied in nursing her to have much time for painting, and we talked sadly of a changed Venice and a vanished English colony.

Two of its most distinguished and lovable figures were by then widows, continuing in London the close friendship they had enjoyed in Italy. Mme Wiel (*née* Alethea Lawley) had discovered a house which had been decorated by Italian artists, and the rooms, with their painted ceilings and *gesso* mouldings, formed a suitable setting for her Venetian furniture. Mrs. Eden (*née* Caroline Jekyll) showed on the walls of her sitting-room in Seymour Street some of her late husband's graceful water-colours—views of the spacious villa and garden near Belluno, to which she had been wont to repair during the height of summer, remaining there through early autumn. It was a spot of much natural beauty, with lovely vistas of the Dolomite Prealpi, and Mrs. Eden's horticultural skill had filled the garden with scent and colour. There Mr. Eden would lie for hours in a long chair beneath the trees or in the shadow of the house; and always, like the poet Lamartine, he was seen surrounded by dogs of one breed. Like the poet too he had a picturesque dignity, a *grand seigneur* air, an urbanity of manner which charmed all who came into his presence. In early middle life he had been crippled through exposure and a series of accidents, and he had been attracted to Venice by the ease of its waterways. His steam launch was one of the first seen on the Canals. At Belluno he had to put up with a less luxurious form of locomotion. After tea, always served in the garden, he and his wife drove out in a little *victoria*, usually in the direction of Socchieva, where Mme Wiel had the lease of a villa unlike any other in the neighbourhood. Its garden had been laid out by a French *émigré* on the plan of one he had loved in his own land, and had as a delightful feature a long, pleached avenue of hornbeam. Signor Wiel, a native of Veneto, knew how to handle his *contadini*. His vintage was conducted on traditional lines; but the vines were carefully and profitably cultivated. At Socchieva I was first introduced to the *uva fragola*, the small purple grapes from America, with a blended strawberry and black-currant flavour, which have been found to resist the pest of *phylloxera*.

Mme Wiel and Mrs. Eden were perhaps specially drawn to one another from a certain resemblance in their situation. Both were

childless: both had husbands who demanded and received from them maternal sympathy and attention. Mrs. Eden's lot was the easier of the two. If her partner had developed some of the selfishness of chronic invalidism, he had the grateful courtesy which masks exigence, and she the nature which delights to spoil and to minister. The pair were, moreover, of the same nationality and social status: their outlook and desires were identical; and they had met and wedded young.

Alethea Lawley's union with a Venetian was an event, on both sides, of mature life. It had taken her noble family by surprise; perhaps they were never wholly reconciled to it. Taddeo Wiel had neither birth, wealth nor personal fascination to recommend him. His character was unblemished, his habits refined; but what superiority he possessed was purely intellectual. His post in the library of St. Mark's assured him a competence and consideration in his own city: outside it he was merely a respectable bourgeois.

He admired and honoured his English wife, but he was nevertheless jealous of the position she took and held in the colony; jealous of the tenacious affection existing between herself and her family; jealous even of the devotion of the English maid, who remained with her till Mme Wiel's death in 1929.

Throughout the period of our residence in Venice Mme Wiel went home alone from time to time, and occasionally some of her relatives came out to her. I remember her brother, Lord Wenlock, and his daughter Irene, at Socchieva, and her sisters, Mrs. Portman and Mrs. Molyneux, in Venice. The latter once took me with her for a delightful two days' stay in Verona, when Mme Wiel, who had written the history of that city in Dent's Mediæval Towns Series, showed herself an accomplished *cicerone*. As I watched her renewal of youthful gaiety, and the joy of the sisters in being on holiday together, I realised the constraint imposed by Taddeo's presence, and the domestic tension created by the moods of the neurasthenic. Yet when, soon after the war-exodus and its hardships, Signor Wiel died of a cancer of long standing, I felt that the British colony had perhaps been unjust in viewing him entirely as a *malade imaginaire*; while I had always perceived that it undervalued his influence on his wife's literary work. Her last and most important book, *The Navy of Venice*, was, she told me, written at his suggestion, and with his constant help and encouragement.

Her letters revealed a trait curiously absent from her books—

a gentle sense of humour; and they had the elusive charm, the endearing friendliness of her conversation.

Like many members of her family she found in the *ecclesia anglicana* the source and background of a deep spiritual life; but her devotion to the Church of her baptism did not preclude friendships with Catholic Italians, lay and ecclesiastical; nor was it, I think, a cause of domestic friction.

She was more cordial and hospitable to the humble *parocco* of Socchieva than was her husband, who never suffered fools gladly; and she shared his affection for the Venetian Patriarch, raised to the Papal Chair as Pius X. When the Wiels went to Rome as the new Campanile was rising they were granted a private audience. The Pope questioned them eagerly as to the affairs of his old see, and especially as to the progress of the great work. 'Your Holiness will come to Venice to bless it,' said Mme Wiel. 'Già, già,' said the Pope, forgetting for a moment that he was the Prisoner of the Vatican; then the animation left his face and he added lamely: 'I shall be there in spirit.'

Though Mme Wiel spoke Italian perfectly and mingled habitually and intimately with Venetians, she was less popular with them, especially with their young people, than was Caroline Eden, whose utter lack of egotism made her the happiest woman I have ever known; that, and perhaps her success in making things grow. She had as great a flair for horticulture as her younger sister, Miss Gertrude Jekyll, and her herbaceous borders at Belluno and on the strips of reclaimed land on the outer edge of the Guidecca were a perpetual delight and source of occupation to her.

Save for its view over the placid waters of the lagoon 'The Garden of Eden,' as it was called in the colony, had few natural advantages; but no one who saw it in the season of irises, roses and madonna lilies will easily forget it. In warm weather about four o'clock, in the lagoon garden, tea seemed always to be on tap; and always it was made and poured by the hostess, who had a theory that no servant—least of all a Venetian—could be trusted to perform either operation.

Immediately opposite the Edens' gate, though parted from it by a narrow, bridged side-canal, was a low, and in outward aspect, rather ramshackle building, which skilful alteration had converted into the Cosmopolitan Hospital. It comprised a couple of wards for sailors, several bedrooms for paying patients and a patch of sheltered garden. Its first matron was the late Olivia Du Cane,



Lady Layard's niece; when we knew it, it was in the charge of Sister Chaffey, a capable, breezy, restlessly energetic woman. She was curiously inarticulate, not from slowness, but from excessive rapidity of thought. Her words tumbled over one another in her attempt to keep pace with the spate of her ideas, and her listeners were somehow rendered as breathless as herself. She delighted to organise entertainments in and on behalf of the Hospital; on which occasions we all felt ourselves like children invited to a school feast. She was chiefly successful in her dealings with the British sailors and with the Venetian servants of the Hospital; and she was certainly liked and trusted by the committee, composed of certain British residents, to which an Italian surgeon and physician were co-opted. There were few days when one did not see Lady Layard's gondola at the water-steps of the Hospital. She took most of her many guests to view it, and few of them were allowed to leave Ca' Capello without giving a donation to it, or at least purchasing some of the necklaces she made and sold for its upkeep. A saucerful of Venetian beads, a pair of pincers and a coil of fine steel wire were always on a table beside her: and conversation only seemed to stimulate the deftness of her fingers. It is sad to think that the institution for which she laboured with such zeal, and which seemed an essential feature of the Venice of her day, has now been closed.

Her position as head of our colony had been acquired without effort and was held without arrogance. She owed it in part to the fame of Sir Henry Layard, in part to her own acquired habits of authority and of responsibility for her compatriots in a foreign land. In Venice, as formerly in Constantinople, she stood for all that was best in the British character and traditions, and the minority who resented her leadership perhaps failed to realise that the self-protective barriers raised in other cities—notably in Florence—against Anglo-American settlers were non-existent in Venice precisely because of the confidence inspired by Lady Layard. Those inimical to her called her narrow-minded—an epithet requiring, but rarely receiving, definition. Undoubtedly Lady Layard, at no period of her life, would have boasted with Mrs. Meynell's Publican: <sup>1</sup>

‘For I am easy, tolerant, keep no rules  
And the world honours me.’

She had her rules and kept them: but she could get on with persons

<sup>1</sup> ‘The Never Vain Glory.’

whose rules differed from her own. She appeared rigid largely because her nature was virile and simple, devoid of artifice and pose; she was always quick to compassion and was incapable of bearing grudges.

She showed herself equally kindly and equally uncompromising towards Royalties and British seamen. Weekly at the Seamen's Institute she would listen patiently to interminable ballads and join in the chorus of rather vulgar comic songs: and she valiantly put up with the odour of coarse tobacco clinging to the rooms (though the men always laid aside their pipes during the concerts); whereas the various Royalties who stayed in Ca' Capello knew that there were only two places where they might smoke—their own apartment on the *mezzanino*, and the glazed balcony, with gay pot-plants, overhanging the Grand Canal. There I remember enjoying, though with a slight sense of disloyalty to my tobacco-hating hostess, the super-excellent brand of cigarettes offered by Prince George of Greece.

She would have liked the plainest of church services, and was always slightly contemptuous of what she called 'religious upholstery'; but she had a deep respect for spiritual values, and an austere sense of beauty in reference to a place of worship. The Salvati warehouse at St. Vio, purchased under the auspices of Sir Henry Layard, had been successfully transformed into an Anglican church in keeping with its Venetian environment; and his widow contributed liberally to a series of coloured windows put in during our residence in Venice, and subsequently to the acquisition of a fine picture as an altar-piece. She also discovered, and induced Queen Alexandra and the Empress Frederick to unite with her in purchasing, eight magnificent standard candlesticks for the sanctuary. We found them there, mere encumbrances, roped together with red cord. Lady Layard seems never to have envisaged the proper use of the joint gift.

She left for a winter of Eastern travel soon after our arrival in Venice, though not before she had been instrumental in finding us a temporary domicile—a little house in Rio Terra Catechumeni let to us by the one-armed Crimean veteran General de Horsey. Soon Christmas was upon us and the question of 'decorations' loomed ahead. The fussiness of conventional evergreens was aesthetically undesirable in a building demanding costly simplicity. The glow of scarlet associated with Christmas could be supplied by poinsettias massed in silver vases on the altar, and a festal note could be struck

by means of the hitherto useless candlesticks. They were polished as only gondoliers can polish brass, fitted with immense wax candles and ranged four on one side, four on the other of the sanctuary. The congregation was unanimous in admiration ; but no one reacted to the novelty so emphatically as did the old Venetian sacristan, who always looked as though he might have stepped out of a procession depicted by Gentile Bellini. After applying his taper and contemplating the effect, he entered the vestry, kissed the Chaplain's hand, and said with tears in his eyes : ' At last I see we worship the same God.' Ever after he addressed my husband as Monsignor.

I do not recall the incident to reveal old Marchesini's curious psychology, but to illustrate that of Lady Layard. At Easter the giant candles were again lighted and Helen, Countess of Radnor, laboriously trained the amateur choir to sing a choral Eucharist. Lady Layard, who had only just returned to Ca' Capello, might have stomached one surprise ; two innovations destroyed her equanimity. After Mattins she left the church.

But when my husband saw her a few hours later she was apologetic rather than resentful. She supposed, she said, she was a Nonconformist at heart : she had her roots in Protestant traditions ; but she did not mean to be obstructionist. She could close her eyes to things she disliked but which gratified her friends.

Lady Layard's representative position and power of organisation were shown conspicuously in the crisis of the Messina earthquake. The appalling news had no sooner reached Venice than she was at her much-used telephone, and after a brief conversation with the *Sindaco*, she rang up various leading women of various nationalities. She might merely have collected and handed over an Anglo-American contribution to the municipal relief fund ; but she envisaged a deeper and more human division of labour. By ten o'clock next day the *fila* of drawing-rooms in Ca' Capello had been converted into work-rooms. Long trestle tables were heaped with rolls of material ; sewing-machines were hired and borrowed ; and any woman who could use a needle was made welcome between the hours of 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.

A collection of ladies'-maids cut out the garments, and even pinned or tacked them together for inexpert workers. Within a few days great bales were ready for shipment in a vessel which sailed from the port of Venice to Sicily, conveying necessities of all kinds to the scene of the disaster.



With the same speed and thoroughness the women's committee under Lady Layard's presidency prepared the barracks on the Riva degli Schiavoni for the temporary reception of the homeless Sicilian refugees.

Lady Layard's Tuesday evening receptions had long been a feature of social life in Venice; and her critics sometimes asked why they were attended by everybody who was anybody, and why the house-parties at Ca' Capello were eminently successful. They alleged that its mistress was not a good hostess; and in a sense, certainly in the French sense, this was true. She obviously made no effort to impress her personality on her guests or direct their conversation. Tall, slim, erect, in black gowns worn with unstudied elegance, and always suggesting her widowed state (even her tiara seemed to shape itself like a widow's cap), she received her guests with brusque cordiality, and often allowed herself to be buttonholed by an old friend, or by a Venetian or English resident who wanted to talk business with her. But at half-past ten she contrived to sweep everyone into the dining-room, where the central table had given place to a buffet spread with refreshments, excellent in quality, simple and unvarying in kind.

The staff of Ca' Capello was incredibly small, loyal and efficient: and with it Lady Layard had for years entertained in the same easy unostentatious manner. It was a manner which in comparison with more modern, and especially with American, entertaining, appeared excessively frugal; but for that very reason it was appreciated by some of her royal guests, one of whom told me that the old-fashioned hospitality of Ca' Capello was to her a refreshing return to the simplicity of her own youth.

It was undoubtedly this dignified simplicity, this absence of parade, which afforded relaxation to persons whose office or station compelled them to stand perpetually at attention. She treated them with unceremonious friendliness. They could go sightseeing or rest in their rooms as they pleased. She would alter her meal hours to suit their convenience; but when once these hours were fixed, she exacted punctuality. Her table decorations, given over to old Pasquale (called 'the gardener' because he looked after her numerous pot-plants) were stereotyped and by no means beautiful; and her meals, though good and well cooked, were not elaborate. She made no attempt to change or augment them for the benefit of princes; and her manner towards her house-guests reflected not

their position or consequence but her own measure of affection for them.

Thus, of Princess Sophie of Greece she showed herself almost maternally fond, for her friendship with the Empress Frederick was a fact remembered on both sides. It was a fact, moreover, not forgotten by the then Kaiser, who in spite of the attractions of a younger and fairer lady in Venice, never failed to pay his respects on arrival and departure to his mother's old friend.

On one of these occasions he gave amusing proof of the diversity of gifts with which he was undeniably endowed. At ten o'clock one bright May morning I went on foot by appointment—I forget on what business—to Ca' Capello. The land door was opened to me by a young man-servant, whose coat was off and who looked hot and flurried. He told me that Giuseppe—the excellent Bolognese major-domo and general factotum—had been called home by a death in his family, and that Sua Eccellenza was expecting me in her sitting-room and would I walk up.

Putting down a half-made bead chain Lady Layard greeted me with the words: 'What a pity you did not come ten minutes sooner. The Kaiser has only just left. He came at nine to say good-bye and has been very useful. The sudden heat (we had had an unusually cold April) made me feel it was time to get the double windows out; but this new lad is not very bright and can do nothing without direction from Giuseppe. He couldn't manage the work at all *till the Kaiser showed him how to do it.*'

While many *hochwohlgeboren* Germans and Austrians enjoyed the hospitality of Ca' Capello, some of them returning to its roof year by year with swallow-like regularity, I remember very few Latins; though Frenchmen occasionally presented letters of introduction and were duly shown the pictures. Among these M. Paul Bourget and his wife were received with special favour, and invited to a luncheon at which Mrs. Gardiner of New York and two or three other *cognoscenti* discussed the price of pictures and the curious fluctuations in the market value of the works of certain painters, or of entire schools. It was the only occasion on which I saw Lady Layard bring forward her own admirable catalogue of the collection—a catalogue in which she presented not only brief summaries of the painters' lives; and the how, when and where of her husband's acquisitions, but also carefully executed miniature reproductions of many of the paintings. The Layard pictures certainly gave an atmosphere to the drawing-rooms of Ca' Capello, and one that was

congenial to the numerous painters and art critics who were on friendly terms with their owner. Of these I remember especially George Wood, A.R.A., who looked so much more like a businessman than a painter, and who had an apartment on the Zattere; his brother-in-law, Sir Luke Fildes, who usually stayed with him in autumn; Mr. Hallam Murray, a nephew-in-law, and an amateur artist of the first order; and Sargent, who made his appearance whenever he was in Venice, and at whose disposal Mrs. Daniel Curtis<sup>1</sup> always placed a studio. I feel real gratitude towards him because once when he took me in to dinner, he discoursed eloquently on the *Commedia dell' Arte*—a subject of which I then knew little, but which I at once began to study with immense pleasure.

In the first of the *fila* of drawing-rooms and close to the famous portrait of Mehemet Ali by Gentile Bellini, a centenarian grey parrot always had his stance; and I sometimes wondered if the position of his cage was designed to emphasise the resemblance between the wicked old bird and the turbaned figure with his thin aquiline nose and narrow crafty eyes. So old was the parrot they might almost have been contemporaries. He had been given to Lady Layard—with the magnificent pearls she habitually wore—by the Sultan Abdul el Hamid, and was feared and respected by her guests. Court bred, his language was entirely decent, but it was often disconcertingly apposite. Pasquale, who looked after him, always maintained that the bird fretted for his mistress when she was absent. Certainly he drooped and died one winter when she was in England and when she had graciously installed us in her own quarters, on one floor of Ca' Capello, in order that I might be more comfortable than in our own picturesque but chilly apartment, on three floors united by a circular stone staircase. Lady Layard had told me not to worry about her pictures or her parrot; but it was impossible not to feel some slight responsibility for both, and it was distressing to write the obituary notice of the bird who had watched the brief lives of so many celebrities, and seen the making of so much history. After passing many days in silent dejection the parrot suddenly, and with emphasis, uttered the single word *Basta!* (enough), and dropped off his perch, a corpse.

As for the priceless collection on the floor below us, we told Pasquale to bring us the cards or letters of introduction of strangers who called to see it; and usually my husband or I went round with them on the pretext of finding the catalogue, or indicating the

<sup>1</sup> Living at Palazzo Barbaro.

position of any given picture. I enjoyed these quiet hours of inspection, and in after years realised how much I had learned from the criticisms of connoisseurs.

Of the sister arts I recollect no representatives at Ca' Capello; no poets or dramatists; no musicians, with the exception of Ethel Smythe, who appeared occasionally with her sister, Mrs. Hunter, the masculine tailor-mades of the one contrasting curiously with the picturesque draperies and laces of the other. Lady Layard was in fact no collector of celebrities; she merely delighted to gather round her old friends and congenial new acquaintances. She had but little feeling for poetry or the drama and rarely went to the theatre or the opera. I was astonished to see her in a box when Gabriele d'Annunzio's *La Nave* was produced for the first time, and believe that only her sense of courtesy towards the Venetians took her there. They saw in the play the story of their past and a presage of their future, and rallied in force. The author was repeatedly called before the curtain, and I had time to note his resemblance to the bust of Shakespeare—only it was a Shakespeare crossed with the strain of a satyr. Horatio Brown, who had been present at the banquet given to the poet by the Venetian Club, not only agreed with me but declared that d'Annunzio was aware of the likeness and endeavoured to accentuate it.

I have turned a flash-light on only half a dozen of the portraits hanging in my gallery of Venetian recollections. Gladly would I illumine others, separately remarkable, collectively making a richly tinted pattern of existence. Gladly too would I have shown certain 'conversation pieces,' and studies of carnival scenes in the Piazza, of *feste* on the lagoons. But the space allotted to me is filled, and reluctantly I close an inadequate impression, and tear my thoughts from a brilliant memory, of life in Venice when this century was young.

*PINE—FOR STURDINESS.*

BY MONA GARDNER.

MATSU gathered her round red face into a fierce scowl. Would that troublesome bone in her ankle, she asked a slimy weed, never learn that she was a grown woman now of eighteen and had work to do? She threw the green thing down on the dyke. Of course it wouldn't answer her. What were weeds but impudent things that pushed up out of the mud if you so much as closed your eyes for a moment to rest them from the white light of the sun? What did they care about a foot that throbbed and twitched as though it would jump off the very leg that held it?

The brittle young rice—that was all they were interested in. To run growing races with it, up and up into the sun, and then to smother its roots and choke them until the leaves turned yellow and sagged like pieces of soggy paper.

But who was there to give her an answer? There was only the father down at the other end of the row, banking the mud. But he never opened his lips to say a word from one hour to the next, even to tell what he thought of this girl-child of his with a foot that softened before its work was done. Yet Matsu knew what he was thinking—because she knew what any father must think when he has sons to feed.

It wasn't as though he wanted to sell her. He wasn't like some fathers who never had a soft word for a girl-child. He'd always been friendly with her, more like a neighbour, really. And before—when he had gone to the town each year—he had always brought back the sweet bean-cakes for her . . . deliciously sweet they were . . . like . . . like . . .

Yes, he was a good father. He would not like doing this thing he had to do. But if her foot was so weak she couldn't do farm work, how could he find a husband for her? What else was there left for him to do but sell her to a house in town where it would not matter if the foot were lame since walking and standing are not a part of the trade that is practised there? What else could he do? It was the way of things in this north country where every mouth is hungry and the mouth that cannot earn its own rice is hungrier still.

Matsu knew this so well. It seemed to her there had never been a time when she had not known it. But *Kwannon-Sama* knew it too. Matsu had told her . . . at first in halting, mumbled little prayers. It seemed so presumptuous to disturb *Kwannon-Sama's* serenity over such a thing as a foot. But little by little, when it seemed as though the Goddess hadn't heard those first requests, Matsu grew more bold until now she could rattle off those prayers like a pilgrim. She'd no more than open her mouth than the words would come tumbling out.

Besides, it was only one foot she prayed *Kwannon-Sama* to harden. That was all she asked. It wasn't as though she were asking for a faithful lover, or a mild-tempered mother-in-law.

Still, in Matsu's mind there was no room for any doubt. *Kwannon* was a woman, wasn't she? Then she would understand. Of course she couldn't be expected to act right off . . . with all the prayers she had to answer. Just from the city people alone there must be . . . hundreds . . . and city people would come first. They always knew so much more about things—even making prayers.

But the incense . . . that ought to count for something. Matsu had kept it alight during all those short days of winter when the sun itself was no more than a candle in the sky. How could the Beneficent One forget that when she knew how many bear-claw rakes Matsu had had to make extra—in the dark hours of the night—to buy this incense?

Oh yes, *Kwannon* would surely answer these prayers. She wouldn't send Matsu to town . . . among strangers. For the moment Matsu felt her heart squeeze itself into a tight ball. The pain that fright brought was more real, more terrifying, than that which any bone might make.

Strangers . . . that was what she dreaded. Imagine every face being new! And not even the Roly One would be there to tug at her sash and nuzzle at the kimono which covered her flat little breasts . . . the round, fat Roly One who was not like the other brothers, but more nearly a part of her. Wasn't it she who had breathed life into those little lungs, life which the mother was too weary to sustain once she had brought this eighth child into the world?

Matsu eased her foot up out of the mud and held it under her for a moment. Just to have it out of the water was a comfort. Then she remembered the father at the other end of the row, and she



thrust it down again. She did so want to do her share of the field work. That was what counted. That was what filled the big straw sacks with the good brown rice . . . so fat . . . so juicy that it fed the family all during the long dead winter when the snow covered every living thing with a smother of white.

Each morning now it was Matsu who crept from her quilts before even the cracks in the shutters showed grey. And it was she who filled the great water crocks in the kitchen, even when it took four and five trips to the well to do it—the brothers always grumbled so over this task and made the second sister ashamed and red with their cross words, saying she was careless and used far too much water anyway.

Matsu knew the small sister wasn't careless. Perhaps she did spill a dipperful now and then. But that was because she had no size at all—her nose no more than coming to the top of the father's girdle. For such a small one it was no easy thing to tend stove and make rice for a family with so many sons.

Still, it was her share, and she must do it. Matsu was of an age now to do field work, and the Aged One had gone to the Ancestors the same week the mother had grown too weary to breathe. And it might be that reaching for pans and lifting charcoal would stretch those short arms: that being in the kitchen where she could snatch mouthfuls as she passed the stove, her body would grow more quickly. Meanwhile Matsu did what she could to help before it was time to follow the brothers to the field.

After she had poured the water to the very brim of those cool black crocks there was the corn to be thrown to the fussing fowls, and the little black pig would squeal like a soul in torment if the mash wasn't set before him straight off. Then there was the fire to be started in the kitchen—little dry twigs to be fed into the black mouth of the stone stove. In the summer this was not work at all, for the twigs were brittle and snapped into flame like fire-crackers, so that even before you could think twice the charcoal would be showing red and shooting sparks up to the thatch itself.

And so Matsu would go from one thing to another in the early morning, until by the time the second sister opened her child's eyes and stirred from under the quilts she shared with the middle brother, Matsu always had last night's rice heating in the big wood-covered pot, and the bean-curd soup bubbling on the back of the stove where it sprayed the air with its sour steam.

But what was this? Nothing. Nothing but old woman's

work. Naturally when a woman's body is through making children and is too stiff to bend in the fields she must be allowed to sit in the sun of the courtyard where she can mend quilts, and now and then throw vegetables in the pot that boils. That is the way of things.

Matsu had woman's work to do . . . she could not potter about the house. The summer was all too short. Only if the brothers and she worked quickly, with never an hour wasted, could one crop be gathered and dried before the heat went out of the sun. Yet here, after only three days of standing in the water, Matsu's foot was objecting. It had behaved this same way during the spring planting . . . and last year too. Only last year the pain had not been quite so bad . . . because the foot had been smaller, perhaps.

She had heard the man down the road talking with her father about the foot . . . the man who lived in the house by the two great rocks who had gone once on a whaler up to the very north itself. He had said something about a disease that consumes. Consumes indeed! Anyone knew that that disease ate at the breath and made you cough. So how could it eat at the bone of one's ankle?

Matsu yanked the head from a tender little weed. Not that she was thinking of the man who had once been on a whaler when she did it . . . that is, not exactly. But who was he to talk about diseases? Wasn't his second son still going about in diapers and talking a queer jargon not even his mother could understand, and it twelve years now since he had started in this world?

Matsu was at the end of the row now and she stood up out of the water for a moment on the turf dyke which separated the paddies. She unwound the towel tucked in the neck of her dress and with it she made a show of drying her dripping face. She hoped the father would think she paused only for that. Anyone might get hot on such a day as this with the sun leaning down out of the heavens like a big red stove so that even the air wavered and shook.

Matsu thought of the blessed shade in the cryptomeria grove about *Kwannon's* shrine where the wind sifting through those high branches made a sound like little waves washing a sandy beach. She turned her head to look at the abrupt green hill which held that sanctuary and even through the vibrating haze she could see quite plainly the sacred arch of red which marked off that hallowed ground. She closed her eyes and for the moment she felt herself passing under that arch again and climbing mossy steps that went



up and up. It was all so familiar—her mind knew it as well as her feet.

It had only been a few days ago that she had gone there to remind *Kwannon*—gently of course—of the favour that had not been granted, and because Matsu, that day more than ever before, dreaded to have her image grow faint in the Merciful One's memory she burned a five copper candle. That would remind *Kwannon-Sama* that she was really serious.

A few days ago . . . oh, but it was a week now. She ought to remember. It was the day after the night the father had been talking with the man down the road who had been on a whaler once. Yes surely, she ought to remember it well. The two men had talked of strange things that night. Not all of those things had Matsu heard . . . because no more than a short while had they sat on the mats of the house. Then they had taken their talk to the village.

Matsu sat sewing after they left, asking questions of the stumpy needle she pushed through the coarse stuff of the middle brother's blue jumper.

But it was the smell of rice wine on the father's breath when he came lumbering in hours later that gave Matsu an answer. Matsu knew then that the evening was not an ordinary one. Never could she remember the father drinking rice wine except on festival days. Well, perhaps a few times he had done it, yes. But it was always to celebrate some special stroke of luck. And what luck was there now? What luck had there been since the time last year when the mother had stopped breathing and the Aged One had followed her to the Ancestors no more than a week later?

What was this now? Matsu asked herself again and again. What was this talk . . . this . . . Could it be about herself? Certainly it had been her foot they had been speaking of when they had left the house. But why . . . why . . . and the man who sold rice wine in the village was also a letter-writer. Was that it? Could a letter have been sent off to one of those houses in town?

Thus did Matsu talk to herself that night when the shuttered house had mingled its odours with the fumes of stale rice wine, and because a dull dead dread had answered that question Matsu had dragged her lame foot up those hundred steps next day to remind *Kwannon-Sama* of the year-old prayer that was yet to be answered.

Matsu wedged the prongs of her straw hat over her ears and then stepped down into the mud again. The water sloshed and made

queer hollow gurgles as her hands worked in wide circles, banking a root and clearing away smothering weeds in the same generous stroke.

She wished her feet were as good as her hands. She had hardly to tell them what she wanted before they did it . . . sometimes even before the head had finished with the thought. It was her hands she let work constantly through the long winter, when moving out of the house was only to fly to the shed and lug back a bag of charcoal as quickly as ever you could.

The fathers and the brothers, of course, would fasten on their straw weather-coats and creak out over the packed snow to fix this or that. Sometimes the thatch had to be scraped so the snow would not lie too heavily upon it, and again, it was a tree whose branches had to be propped and strengthened. And there was always fishing to be done if the waves in the bay were not too white.

But the second sister and the Roly One and Matsu would sit inside, their feet snug and warm under the mountainous quilt which covered them and the charcoal brazier as well. And while the second sister told the Roly One stories of cunning foxes who could bewitch a maiden with the wave of a tail, Matsu's quick fingers would fit and bind bamboo splints into bear-claw rakes.

All through the neighbourhood, even as far as the next village beyond their own, Matsu's rakes were said to be strong and supple. She seemed to know just when to cut the green bamboo so that the sap drying in it would leave it tough and strong, and though she soaked each end in water the fibre was never weakened because she soaked it too long and it would bend for her like cloth.

Each spring the man who wore a foreign suit would come from the town to buy Matsu's rakes—great bundles of them, one grooved into the other, which hung drying in the rafters of the house. It wasn't that he bought only Matsu's rakes. He'd go all through the district on his foot-bicycle giving silver to each house with rakes to sell. It was told about the village that this same man took these rakes to a shop in town and that to the people who came there his price for a single rake was one whole yen. But Matsu didn't believe a word of it. No one, not even a towns-person, would pay such a staggering price for a bundle of bamboo sticks that could be laced together almost while you were thinking about it.

Although the man came regularly each year, always on the same day of the moon-calendar, Matsu never felt really sure of him until she actually saw him coming towards her across the littered court-

yard, smiling and bowing in the way he had. Each year it seemed to her that by now he would have discovered for himself how simple a trick it was to make these rakes; and once he did, wasn't it reasonable to expect that he'd twist them into shape himself instead of paying good money for those made by others?

And always Matsu spent the money he gave her as though it were her last. Even as he counted it into her hand, one shining fifty-sen piece after another—Matsu doggedly refused paper money, it seemed so insubstantial—she knew to the last rin where it would be spent.

A good half of it went to the father right off that he might buy fresh seed for the planting. And there was the sugar and salt that must be bought for the summer—enough to last them until the spare rice could be sold. But after that it was easy—there was only the family to spend it on. The brothers and she could share it.

Copper by copper she'd portion out the amounts. First, there must be the new kimono—a really good one—for the elder brother. He would be head of the house some day. For the second brother a new girdle . . . to wear with the kimono Matsu had cut down for him from the one the elder brother had outgrown.

For herself this year Matsu had decided she needed nothing. She was old enough now to wear the kimonos the mother had left—those little-used ones that had come to the father's house with her the first year before she had really been a mother. There was the black one with circles and dots, swirling about like mad balloons on a windy day. But Matsu's favourite was the blue one with silver stars shooting up and down the sleeves like fire-crackers at the Summer Festival.

The kimonos were all folded away in layers and layers of cotton cloth, still Matsu knew each pattern like she knew a friend's face. It had been the mother's habit each year to take these kimonos from their wrappings and air them. With Matsu this had been a privileged ritual which permitted her small hands to smooth and stroke the soft cloth as she looked for mildew spots. And, as they worked, the mother had always talked. In that slow even voice of hers she had told Matsu again and again each dizzy detail of the times the kimonos had been worn. Could one ever believe to look at it that the circles and dots had been to the far side of the bay and had danced at the Festival of the Dead, while the lantern boats flickered and swayed like fireflies in a breeze, as they crossed the sea of night with their phantom cargoes?

Matsu blessed the luck that made these kimonos hers this year, for that way it left her enough coppers to get a bright new thing for the second sister . . . something with splashes of red and blue to show off those red-apple cheeks of hers.

So on through the family Matsu would portion out her money, never even slighting the sum that went for the incense for the house altar, and the two extra sticks to be burned at the fishermen's shrine for the spirit of the brother who had died in a winter's sea.

To-day as she thought of these things Matsu sloshed up one row and down another in water half-way to her knees. The locusts in the high pines strummed incessantly on the tiny drums of their bodies until the air seemed to shake and vibrate to that rasping rhythm. Perhaps it was something in that deafening screech that took her mind back a year ago to that night when the locusts had shrilled and screamed like demons and the blood pounding in her ears had made it seem for those few moments as though all the locusts in the world were inside her own head.

Oh, it had been foolish of her to go out on that night of all nights . . . the one night of the year when the Fox God took man's form and roamed about their village! Every girl knew what would happen to her on that night if the Fox God should happen to fancy her body. Of course Matsu would never for a minute have stepped foot off the house mats if it had not been for the mother moaning with that sickness in the head. Someone had to go to the village for the patches to paste on the forehead. The brothers and the father had been tired.

As though it were happening this very day Matsu saw again the lanterns and the red-cloth booths in the village making festival for *Inari-Sama's* visit. Far down the main street there had been the twang of many *samisens* and the shouts of dancers, Matsu had not waited to see the dancing though. Straight to the man with medicines—who sold sandals and fish-oil as well—had she gone. Even before his doors there had been a livid paper statue of the god himself, but though the sight of that grotesquely fertile image shook her body like a March wind, Matsu did not glance at it more than once. She bought the patches and was out and away down the road as fast as ever her clattering *geta* would take her.

But on the way home the shadows which had seemed grey before turned to ink. It was like jumping down a well to come from the lights of the village into this black path; so that even before the

god grabbed her she knew that he would—the stone inside her chest had told her so.

Just after the second turning it had happened. He had jumped at her from behind a clump of wild wistaria. Matsu thought perhaps her heart would never move again, she was so frightened ; but she did not struggle when he dragged her back from the path. It was *Inari-Sama's* night, wasn't it ? He was a guest of the village, wasn't he ?

And so the Fertile God's earthly form had laid her in the short bamboo grass and had used her body. Overhead the locusts had rasped their metallic screech. Matsu let them scream for her ; and all the while she had clutched the head plasters for the mother in her hand—for whatever would the father have said if she had lost that which cost thirty whole coppers ?

No one had paid her any slight notice when she let herself into the house a little later. The mother was too dazed by pain to see anything, and the father and brothers were crowded under one mosquito net, smoking and talking about the next day's planting. Nor had she had any time to think about herself then. There were the bed rolls to bring out and spread on the floor under the other nets, and the clumsy long shutters to fit into place. Once she had lifted the neck-band of her kimono though, to smell it . . . just to be sure the reek of rice wine which *Inari's* substitute had breathed on her was no longer noticeable.

But next day, after she had thought through the night, she said nothing. There was really nothing to tell yet. After all, she had gone out on the road the one night in the year when *Inari's* visit was made a festival in the village. Naturally, if the Fertile One left seed in her . . . But he hadn't. She knew for sure by the time summer was finished that the god had not selected her to bear a child of his. So there was really nothing to tell.

. . . . .

That night when the father put down his rice bowl for the last time he looked across at Matsu ; then, after drawing a long breath, he let the lids close down over his eyes as he said : ' In the morning you need not do the work in the fields, Matsu-ko, because on the day that follows to-morrow you are to go on a trip.' His voice was unaccented, flat, like a tired pupil reciting a lesson from memory.

' A long trip, father ? ' Matsu faltered. But she knew the answer even before the words left his lips.

'You are going to the city. You will need to-morrow to prepare yourself . . . and to say good-bye.'

Matsu felt the sister's hand clutch at her arm and she nearly turned her head to look at the other one. But she remembered herself just in time and pressed her arms tight against her body. This was no time to have tears—all eyes were on her. Wasn't she named for the pine? And what was so sturdy as the pine? She blinked away the mist that seemed to veil her eyes and she bowed her head towards the father.

'Shall I say a short good-bye?' Matsu asked in a voice as flat as the father's. It might have been a game of questions and answers, so devoid was either voice of individuality, or of passion.

'No, your visit in the city will be a long one. You may tell the Ancestors when you inform them of this to-morrow . . . that you go on this trip for the good of the family. They will be proud of you . . . and will surely bless one so steadfast in her filial respect.'

He paused a moment now—not that he expected an answer—but though he knew the words well, somehow they no longer came easily from his lips. 'I too shall inform the Ancestors, and I shall speak well of you. . . . You are a good . . . daughter, Matsu-ko. . . .' For a second his voice wavered and had accent. He could not go on until he took his eyes away from that sleek black head so patiently bowed before him. Then he continued: 'Our neighbour down the road has been the go-between in arranging this matter of your . . . visit . . . new home . . . and it is he who will be my second self and . . . take you . . . to the city when the day comes. . . . You will leave at the hour after breakfast.'

He pressed his lips together. He was finished.

'I hear and I obey.'

Matsu heard her lips repeating the familiar formula before she realised they were moving. But what was she saying? What was this that she was promising to do? Could that be her heart alone that made such a noise? . . . Surely the others would hear it and wonder. She dug her elbows into her body.

No! No! She couldn't obey . . . she couldn't leave this house . . . what would happen . . . the second sister . . . and the Roly One?

But the father had spoken. He had said she was a good daughter. She could not fail him now. However could he explain it to the Ancestors if she did? And suppose he should hear her heart now . . . what would he think of her?



Someone might speak of the noise any minute. Like waves in a cave, it sounded. . . . But why did she sit here? Was she sewn to the floor? The father had finished eating, she could go now. . . .

Her hand fumbled with the thick wooden cover of the rice pot as she lifted it. To-night the pot was light . . . almost empty. How could they have eaten so much? The morning portions would be scant . . . how the brothers would grumble over that. . . . Should she cook more now? Perhaps if she took only soup herself her share would make the other bowls seem full. . . .

As she stepped down from the house mats into the kitchen she thought she heard the elder brother speak her name. But he was not calling her, he was just saying: ' . . . with this money from Matsu-ko to set me up in man's estate then I will begin talk tomorrow for the big paddy by the Red Hill. The price for it can be made cheap this year, and it is a good field . . . if I am quick I can yet take a late crop from it this summer. . . . '

Matsu closed the dividing panel. Now they couldn't hear the noise her heart was making, she told herself.

. . . . .

It was late that night when Matsu pulled her twitching leg up the time-rubbed steps to the loft-room. It was late because there had been so much to do. She had cooked fresh rice after all . . . it wouldn't do to have the brothers hungry in the morning.

Each bone . . . each little inch of bone seemed to ache as she crawled in under the mosquito netting and settled herself on the quilts. Not that she wanted to sleep—there would be time enough for that some other night—now she wanted to think. It was only when her hands were quiet that she could really think, otherwise her hands seemed to bewitch her mind.

She pushed the quilt away from her body—the night was as hot as midday. There was a small breeze outside. She could hear it wandering in and out amongst the papery bamboo leaves, but, of course, it couldn't get into the house through the heavy wooden shutters. She wished the night air wasn't filled with such poisonous vapours . . . it would be so nice to open the shutters and feel that breeze.

The Roly One stirred fretfully at her side and she turned in the hot dark to feel him . . . he sometimes had a way of poking his little fists right out under the net. His face was wet now, and hot,

and sticky. Matsu wiped it gently with the sleeve of her kimono and he lay quiet again. She went on smoothing the wiry hair back from his forehead. The hair was too long. It needed to be cut.

She'd cut it to-morrow . . . that's what she'd do. The first thing in the morning she'd do it . . . and then . . . she'd dress him prettily and take him with her . . . strapped on her back he wouldn't be so very heavy. He could go with her as she said good-bye. It would be so jolly for him . . . he'd been kept at the house too much lately. He needed to get out. And it would be company for her when she told the Ancestors . . . she mustn't forget to go and thank *Kwannon-Sama* and tell her that she needn't bother about those prayers now. . . .

Oh, she'd forgotten about the winter kimono she was going to make, that is, cut down for him . . . that spotted blue one the middle brother had sat in too often. It would be so easy to cut out that worn spot. One of the sleeves would do for the new panel in the back . . . and the other sleeve could be divided to make two. They'd be a little tight maybe . . . but the Roly One's arms were so small . . . it was only his middle that was round and bulged like a melon.

She wouldn't have time to fix it now. Yet he needed that kimono this winter . . . he'd be cold without it. She oughtn't to let him be cold. . . . She'd take it with her. That's what she'd do . . . put it in her basket and take it with her to the city. There'd be time . . . oh, just a little time, perhaps, when she could sew on it. Then she'd be sure the Littlest One would be warm when the winter came.

Perhaps there would be time to-morrow to walk to the Long Beach . . . she'd like to see the waves slide up on the white sand once more. There were no waves to see in the city, not even an ocean. It was queer to think of a place like that.

She wondered if the house she was going to would have a garden. She'd heard someone say once that some city houses had not even a tree beside them. And the house she went to . . . would it be like that? Would there be anyone of all those strangers who would be friendly . . . or kind? She hoped . . . oh, how she hoped . . . that they would give her a small dark room, so very dark that she would never see how strange the faces were that entered that room and bent down over her. . . .

With a sob she pulled the quilt up over her face.

*Tokyo.*



# LOVE.

CHILD, for we are young, I love you.

What strange wind is love?

The ponderous earth whirls like a windy mote amid the dust of stars.

The unimaginable atoms pulse within the veins and flesh and sinews of the world.

They beat within our hands and brains,

A seething ordered all-but-nothing.

The stars flame for one brief moment in the breath of God and die—

And I?

What am I in the midst of these that has the strength to say,  
'I love you'?

How frail then, and how strong is love!

The Gods can know no fiercer joy than this,

Nor can the Gods say more than I

Who say, I love you.

Dear, for we are old,

Since God was, and being, gave first birth to Time;

Since Time first ruled the tiny complex destinies of men,

And sons and fathers learned a little and a little more of beauty  
and of music and of love,

To give unwittingly to sons and fathers in the last grey niche of  
Life;

Since mothers first knew kindliness

And made long-suffering and quiet hands their own;

Man has kept beautiful the love I bear for you—

The love that came from some dim lovely God

Who touched the germs of life with sure miraculous hands—

How else were love?

We bear the beauty of the years within our hearts,

And in our souls the sorrow and the laughter of the world.

We whose hearts are older than the dust that claims our dust,

Shy children in eternity,

We cannot understand, and yet

In all the strange immeasurable forces of the spheres, we are,

And while we are this unimaginable gift is ours.

What need to understand ?  
 Let all else lie in Time's deft hand but this,  
 The love that bids me say,  
 'I love you.'

RAYMOND MURRAY.

*TO A WOMAN BURIED AT SEA.*

UNQUIET seas above her,  
 Below the coral-reef,  
 The tumbling waters cover  
 Alike her bones, our grief :

No harbour of contentment,  
 No quiet anchorage,  
 May we not feel resentment  
 That ever there must rage

The slow relentless breaking  
 Of angry hissing surf  
 That covers her till waking  
 Instead of grass-grown turf :

No slow-tolled churchbells ringing  
 The mortal to the sod,  
 Only the salt winds singing  
 To speed her path to God :

No priest to aid her dying,  
 No Cross to mark her faith,  
 Only the sea-birds' crying  
 And round her dim sea-wraith :

He's called her—the great Reaper—  
 And taken what He gave ;  
 Our prayer be, ' May He keep her  
 In her far lonely grave ! '

Her cold stars shall watch over  
 Till dawns Eternity,  
 And racing tides shall cover  
 Till ' there be no more sea.'

I. SHIPTON.

## EAST IS EAST.

## I. ODDITIES AND COMMODITIES.

BY MAJOR C. S. JARVIS.

No one can serve in Egypt for any length of time without coming in contact with that queer and intriguing community, the *Qaribs*, and the longer one stops in the country and the higher one rises in the service the more numerous and insistent they become. The *Qaribs* are not, as one might suppose, a distinct race like the Howietat Arabs or the Nubian blacks, for they may be of any nationality—Egyptian, Berberine, Arab or Sudanese, but whatever their breed they have one point in common, and that is they are the poor relations of one's staff, either private or official, and they all require employment and, what is more, insist on obtaining it.

The actual meaning of the word '*Qarib*' is 'near,' and it is used as a slang expression to denote any relation or connection—for instance, a brother is a *Qarib*, but so is a brother-in-law, an uncle by marriage, and a third cousin five times removed, but such relatives and connections do not become real *Qaribs* until they are out of work and in search of employment. In the past apparently all employment in Egypt was obtained by means of influence, and the big Pashas had to find posts for hordes of dependants, who in their turn were expected to find employment for their relatives, and so on *ad infinitum*. The belief therefore persists till to-day that the very finest, and in fact the only possible recommendation for a job is a word in the ears of the great conveyed to him by a confidential clerk, favourite servant, or groom.

The peculiarity about the Egyptians and their neighbours, the Berberines and Sudanese, is the manner in which they inherit, collect and acquire unemployed and unemployable dependants. The ordinary Coptic clerk, who obtains Government work as a taxation cashier on the lordly sum of £8 per month usually finds himself installed in this world with a very complete equipment

of indigent relations, consisting of a paralysed father, a mother, three quite unmarried sisters, a couple of out-of-work brothers, and possibly a ne'er-do-well uncle thrown in. Like the unfortunate worker-bee, who toils all day to provide food for drones and immature queen, he accepts his fate uncomplainingly, and it never seems to occur to him that he is loaded above the Plimsoll mark with encumbrances, for when he decides to take a wife to add to his responsibilities he does not select a relationless orphan or foundling as one would naturally expect in the circumstances but almost invariably chooses a mate with a bed-ridden father, an idiot sister and at least four workless brothers all requiring support. With some of the lower-paid officials this gathering together of dependants appears to be a craze like the collecting of stamps, antique furniture, butterflies, etc.; and they seem to vie with each other to see who can accumulate the greatest number and the finest specimens.

Actually, of course, this tacit and uncomplaining acceptance of responsibility for all relatives is a very fine trait in the national character and is one of the reasons why one hears so little about unemployment in Egypt. The people themselves shoulder the onus of providing for their dependants and they thus relieve the State of the necessity of finding money for doles, outdoor relief, etc., but like everything else of that nature it is grossly abused. It is a very common occurrence to find a very poorly paid clerk supporting three or four hefty male relatives, who, because they have received a smattering of education, consider themselves too superior to work with their hands, and who loaf about indefinitely clad in European suits waiting for some form of clerical employment which they can never obtain owing to their lack of qualifications—and the amazing part about it is that the little clerk apparently accepts his fate uncomplainingly. This does not mean, however, that he is not going to take steps to improve matters if an opportunity presents itself, and immediately there is the slightest prospect of a vacancy on one's staff one hears about it—and hears early in the morning moreover.

It may be that a whisper has spread that Mohammed Effendi employed at Stores is about to be discharged as unfit, or that an increase is contemplated in the employées in the Tintah Town Council. Nothing official has come through yet and probably no news will be received for a month or more, but on rising in the morning one has the feeling of something untoward in the air—

a rustle or stir such as one experiences before a thunderstorm. On looking out into the garden one notices lurking among the trees and shrubs several red tarbushes, and when the *safragi* (house boy) brings in the early morning tea he coughs discreetly, and, deciding that one's temper is fairly safe, mentions the fact that a vacancy is occurring shortly and that in his opinion Ahmed Effendi's brother would fill the post adequately. He has probably received five piastres for this with the promise of fifty more if the job materialises, so it is worth while risking a slight display of irritation.

As one comes down the steps of the house into the garden the lurking tarbushes materialise and applicants rush forward and shove into one's hands lengthy screeds extolling their relative's accomplishments, whilst the whole way to the Governorate one collects further documents till finally the orderly has to carry the accumulation. At the office one's own particular clerks come in one by one, and, having dealt cursorily with the work of the day, remind one that a vacancy may shortly occur and that they also possess *Qaribs* of astonishing merit that require placing. The pathetic part about the whole business is that precisely the same state of affairs, concerning the same vacancy, is taking place in twenty different offices in different parts of the country so that the prospect of obtaining the post for any particular applicant is to all intents and purposes *nil* from the start.

On return to the house for lunch one probably finds that one's long-suffering wife has gone to bed with a 'headache,' finding that the only possible means of avoiding the waves of black-robed femininity that have been surging round the verandah all the morning and leaking into the bedrooms and bathrooms. There is a very firm belief in the East that once the sympathy of the wife has been enlisted that the battle is won—apparently the Egyptian is not such an omnipotent Pasha in his home as he would have us believe. There is a general conviction—largely fallacious—that in the Mohammedan world the husband is the hundred-per-cent He-man and rules his wife with a rod of iron. Actually the percentage of trouser-wearing wives and crushed-worm husbands is about the same as that which pertains in England, i.e. rather high.

One of the commonest forms of *Qarib* is a vague shadow that one imagines one has seen flit into a dark corner by the door when one enters the kitchen suddenly. It is such a very nebulous

shadow and fades so rapidly that it is only after several surprise visits that one decides definitely that one *has* seen something. Enquiries will then cause this phantom to take definite shape, and one will discover that it is the cook's cousin—a very solid individual tipping the scale at about sixteen stone and incidentally out of employment. He is such a very massive creature that one can only marvel how he managed to appear so shadowy and indistinct for so long a period. He is, of course, feeding at one's expense, and is standing by till such time as the *safragi* may fail one owing to a bout of drunkenness, sudden illness, or some other untoward event when the *Qarib*, clad in the snowiest of white *galabias* and the smartest of red belts, will take his place at the table and wait with such perfection and silent skill that one feels that one's household will not be completely efficient till he has replaced the erring *safragi* permanently. Unfortunately, however, it nearly always transpires that this pitch of excellence is merely transient, and that actually he is a worthless and lazy scoundrel which accounts for his being a *Qarib*.

Then one may tell one's orderly that a smart and intelligent boy of not more than fourteen is required to act as second gardener and carrier of messages, and that a suitable and sprightly youth that will be quick on his feet should be obtained at once. The following day one finds crawling about the garden an elderly and decrepit individual with one eye and a stiff leg, and it appears that this is the only suitable boy that can be found for the job. None of the other applicants filled the bill in any way, and the fact that the selected candidate happens to be the uncle of the orderly's wife is merely one of those queer coincidences that will occur from time to time in the Orient.

One of the worst cases of *Qarib* planting was the man who ran my private electric-light plant at El Arish. It was a small three-horse-power plant with sixteen storage batteries, and was installed to run a Frigidaire and the house lighting. The peculiarity about these small electric plants is the storage battery, as the Company when they sell the set to you will inform you without batting an eyelid that the cells will last for seven years 'with care.' 'With care' is a very useful proviso as the obvious retort when the cells peter out, as they do invariably after a year or eighteen months' service, is that proper care has not been observed, and as it is impossible to call reliable and competent witnesses to prove that you have sat up holding the pulse of the set for 365



nights a year the salesman will get away with it every time and sell you a fresh set of plates at £50.

I have known all sorts and conditions of competent and efficient men who have endeavoured to run these private plants: retired engineer admirals trained to work 18-inch guns by electric power, civil engineers who have spent their lives erecting 20,000-volt sets for the lighting of cities, and managers of big companies that have harnessed rivers to supply power, and they have one and all failed to do any good with a 25-cell set. I have only met one man that made his seven years' guaranteed battery last more than three and this happened to be an Indian Army colonel who did himself so well with port at dinner that he fell asleep at 9 p.m. sharp and never noticed if there was any light in the house after this hour or not.

When my own set was purchased I told the Government electrician to select a smart youth capable of understanding the mysteries of volts and ampères—things I have never been able to understand myself—and teach him to run the engine. I then went on leave to England for three months, and on my return found the selected man installed and at work. I thought when I first saw him that he had a most vacant face and loose, silly mouth, and discovered, when the batteries completely disintegrated after six months' work, that he could only distinguish between red positive wires and black negative on those days when he was really concentrating. It did not come naturally to him to concentrate—that is to say he had to get up early in the morning, pull himself together, and do some swedish exercises and really heavy thinking before he realised he was a mechanic at all—and any little thing put him off. Whenever one of his children was ill, for instance, he charged up the set positive to minus and minus to positive and forgot to put oil in the engine. Unfortunately he had a very large family and they were all very unhealthy. Needless to say he was a *Qarib*—a very close *Qarib* of the Government mechanic and a recognised village idiot into the bargain. This particular *Qarib* cost me a matter of £120 before I ridded myself of him.

One of the jobs that the Egyptian Government consider of very minor importance is that of *Farrash* to a rest house. *Farrash*, when translated literally, means bedmaker, and he is the man who keeps the rest house clean, makes the beds and generally takes charge of things. If the *Farrash* does his work properly, it is a fairly responsible post, and, if the rest house in question is

used frequently, it is one that calls also for a certain amount of work. A *Farrash* if he is to be of any value should be a superannuated cook or *safragi* as in that case he will know enough about civilised houses not to use the sheets as table-cloths and the table-cloths for sheets, but for many years now the post of *Farrash* has been filled almost exclusively by *Qaribs*—and the most hopeless type of *Qarib* at that.

In my early days in Sinai I called in at one of our rest houses and found its condition indescribable—the dirt was beyond belief, the knives were red with rust, the cooking-pots caked with the remains of age-old meals, and a Saluki bitch was suckling a litter of pups on one of the beds. My servants rushed around trying to evolve order out of chaos, but my repeated shouts for the *Farrash* met with no response. Finally I sent for the N.C.O. in charge of the post and ordered him to produce the *Farrash* at once, and after a protracted search a wild, half-naked creature was produced. This it appeared was the *Farrash*, or rather the man who drew the £2 10s. a month for the post.

‘And who recommended this thing for the job of *Farrash*?’ I demanded. ‘It’s an idiot.’

‘I know,’ said the N.C.O. ingenuously. ‘It’s my son, and he has no brain and is no good for anything. I recommended him for the post as I wish him to *akl aysh* (eat bread) at the Government expense. He is no good for any work, but I can’t keep him always.’

Whilst on the topic of *Farrashes* I recall a rather amusing and typical episode that occurred in Sinai in connection with Kuntilla rest house. Kuntilla, which lies on the Palestine frontier about 140 miles south from El Arish, possesses a rest house I do not use very frequently, but one year, shortly after I had returned from leave in England, I suddenly announced my intention of going to inspect this post. I set off the following morning with two cars, and after travelling some ten miles noted a small column of dust in front also moving rapidly southwards. I asked my driver what car it was, but he had no idea apparently and neither had the other driver, though the column of dust was caused by a motor-car that had obviously come from El Arish. Sixty miles out I stopped at the post at Kosseima for some twenty minutes and the car in front, which I had almost overhauled, obtained a good start so that I did not sight it again till we were within a few miles of Kuntilla. I stepped on the gas to try and catch up

with it, for I recognised it as a Government car, but the driver followed suit and we made what was practically a dead heat of it on arrival at Kuntilla rest house.

On entering the building, which had only just been opened up, I found a frantic and sweating *Farrash* rushing around, trying to arrive at some semblance of order and hurling sheets and blankets on the beds. He was in the last stages of exhaustion and shaking with fear, so I asked him if by any chance he had been a passenger in the mysterious car that had arrived a minute before me, and then my servants and drivers, realising that further secrecy was useless, came out with the truth of which they had been aware from the start. One of my junior Egyptian officers whilst I had been on leave had absorbed the *Farrash* of Kuntilla rest house into his own household at El Arish as a servant, hoping that I should not visit the post till this most necessary domestic had been returned. Unfortunately and most inconveniently I had decided to visit this place immediately on my return, and in a most ungentlemanly manner had not given due warning which the customs and habits of the East require, with the result that the unfortunate *Farrash* had had to be pushed off at dawn in a low horse-powered car in a frantic endeavour to arrive at his post before the Governor himself, driving a much more powerful car, put in an appearance.

In my early days in Sinai, before the peninsula was invaded by swarms of desert motorists, the post of *Farrash* at the outlying rest houses did not attract the best type of applicant. The life was too hopelessly dull and featureless to appeal to any but those who had lost all possible hope of obtaining employment elsewhere, and the rest houses in consequence suffered from the shortcomings of those misfits who used carving-knives as wood-choppers, kept the paraffin in the kettle, and slept in all the beds in turn to obviate the necessity for airing.

It occurred to me that if I expected to have clean and efficient rest houses I must employ *Farrashes* who were more or less skilled in house work, and as the result I conceived the brilliant idea of engaging Egyptian *safragis* for the posts. What I had quite overlooked was the Egyptian's natural loathing of the desert, for, though the Arab thinks there is nothing in all the world so entirely satisfactory and charming as a barren gravel plateau with one scrub-bush every mile, the Egyptian, who dwells in a narrow and intensely cultivated valley, detests and moreover is terrified of the sandy wastes that surround his home. He seems to be under the

impression that the desert is full of wild beasts—species not definitely known—that will tear him to pieces at night.

I got in touch with four out-of-work *safragis* in Cairo, brought them to El Arish, and the following day took them out by car to their new isolated homes, dropping them one by one at their respective rest houses. In those days we used to try and run a Government carrier-pigeon service with the idea of sending urgent messages from post to post, but the pigeons apparently became infected with the Bedouin failing of considering that time is not a dimension but merely a state of mind; and, on being loosed, went on a joy flight, returning to their lofts in a most disreputable and dishevelled state after two or three days' delay. In other words they were a most definite failure, but in those days we were still hoping that we might do something with them, and so, in addition to the *safragis*, I took several pairs of carrier-pigeons with me which I released together with the *safragis* at the various posts.

I arrived back at El Arish three days later with that delightful feeling of accomplishment—of a task well and truly done—that is so satisfying to one's self-esteem, but it was rather shattering to be met on the doorstep by a tired but voluble *safragi*—ex-*Farrash* at Kossiema—who handed in his resignation on the spot, and demanded to be sent back to Cairo at once. The following morning the Hassana *Farrash* arrived—a trifle more weary and travel-worn as he had done thirty more miles—and also demanded his release, and before the week was out the whole of my carefully collected staff—footsore, weary, but very determined—had returned to Headquarters with their resignations in their hands. The pigeons I had loosed at the same time had unfortunately not shown the same speed nor desire to return to the home loft, and the only satisfaction I obtained from the experiment was the definite proof that fat and untrained Egyptian servants could travel across the desert considerably faster and arrive with greater punctuality than the carrier-pigeons who were maintained solely for the work.

There is a rest house in Lower Egypt, which in the past must have been a very delightful little place, but which is now in a state of complete disintegration through age both as regards the structure, which is falling down, and the furniture, which has fallen down and is merely lodged together by a *Farrash* who would be 'Plus 4' at jig-saw puzzles if he took up the pastime. An

optimistic estate agent might value the building and its contents at about £20, and the peculiarity about it is that a far-seeing Government has equipped it with the most efficient fire-fighting plant I have ever seen. In a row on the wall of the verandah are six red water-buckets, three fire-extinguishers, six firemen's axes, an expanding ladder (the house being one story only), and a set of brass firemen's helmets. One feels almost inclined to start a fire merely to justify the provision of this marvellous outfit, but there is the awful feeling at the back of one's mind that probably there would be no one to operate the plant except the *Farrash*, who is older even than the building and quite as decrepit.

The mention of brass helmets reminds me of the story of a small town in Palestine that decided to equip itself with a modern fire-engine, complete with helmeted firemen. After much delay the engine and the uniforms arrived, but the most important part of the equipment in Oriental eyes—the big brass helmets—did not materialise owing to a clerical error in ordering the outfit. However, the men were enlisted, and training in working the engine proceeded. Some time later when the men had been passed out as efficient and qualified the helmets arrived, but, alas, they were one and all too big for the heads of the trained men. This, however, did not defeat the Town Council—if the helmets did not fit the men, men must be found to fit the helmets. The old staff were at once dismissed and the district was carefully combed out for men with specially large-sized heads who could wear the brass helmets in a smart and firemanly manner.

Another peculiarity about rest houses is the fact that the local workman has never yet discovered that there is such a thing as a right-hand lock for a right-hand door and a left-hand one for a left. In the ordinary house there are probably an equal number of each variety, and by the law of averages the workman ought to get a matter of fifty per cent right, but actually this is never the case. They are invariably all upside down. Various persons trying to open them by ordinary means have imparted to each lock an individual peculiarity that can only be overcome by following out an intricate formula known to the *Farrash* and no one else. This consists of a variety of movements, such as a half-turn to the key, a kick on the lower right-hand panel of the door, followed by the other half-turn at the psychological moment; or a complete twist in the wrong direction, a pull inwards and sharp jerk upwards, etc. etc. It is incredible the number of com-



binations the ordinary lock can provide when it has been fitted upside down and treated by unsuspecting people as if it were a normal lock. The incredible part about the whole business, however, is the consummate ease with which the *Farrash* can manipulate the key and open the door after one has spent a frantic quarter of an hour trying to get the key to budge.

The handles of such locks, in protest against the rough treatment they receive, become detached from the bolts to which they are normally fastened by a small screw, and when this happens the *Farrash* always inserts a large french nail, twisting up the sharp end to keep it in position. This is a most devilish contrivance as the unwary person gripping the handle and giving it a turn receives a deep and painful gash across the knuckles of his forefinger. The *Farrash*, however, can handle these implements of torture with an immunity from wounds that rather suggests the skill of a snake-charmer.

Another queer trade in Egyptian life is that of *Boab*, or door-keeper, and when one has seen them at work one understands the outlook of the Psalmist who preferred to be a doorkeeper to dwelling in the tents of wickedness. I do not know what sort of a life one leads in a tent of wickedness, but I do realise that the average *Boab's* day consists of twenty-four hours' complete idleness, and it is difficult to better that.

He is usually a large and corpulent gentleman with a dusky complexion and he wears always a long black *galabia* or dressing-gown. His outlook on life is morbid, but he possesses nevertheless a most healthy appetite, and he is addicted particularly to untidy foodstuffs or anything that will create an unsavoury litter. In the spring he buries his face to the ears into vast slices of water-melon and throws the resulting half-gnawed rind around him; his midday meal always includes hard-boiled eggs and he strews the garden path with the resulting shells; in the autumn he chews sugar-cane the whole day, ejecting half-masticated pellets in every direction like an owl; and he adds a tasteful garnishing to the general effect by adding cigarette cartons, empty match-boxes and unsuccessful lottery tickets. For its size Cairo has probably more unsuccessful lottery tickets littering its streets than any other city in the world.

The *Boab* sits all day on a wooden bench at the gateway of the house for which he is responsible, and there must be some hidden charm about him for he has many cronies, usually large



and lugubrious creatures like himself. He and his friends are great conversationalists and keep up a light and chatty discourse the whole of the day and half the night. When topics of conversation fail the *Boab* and his friends sing; they are not naturally cut out for songsters and their taste in music is mournful like their expressions. If anything will cause a man to lay on his bed and look back on his life with sorrow and regrets for past misdeeds and to view the future with grave misgivings as to whether life is really worth while, it is a *Boab* crooning his dirges to the moon on some Egyptian night. A friend of mine who lived in Cairo and had *Boabs* on either side of his house bought an air-gun. In his opinion nothing would knock the song out of a *Boab* quicker than a B.S.A. pellet at fifty yards' range.

Exactly what useful purpose a *Boab* performs I have never discovered. He certainly does nothing towards keeping the portals of his charge clean and tidy, and so far as guarding it goes a regiment of Cavalry with an attendant battery of Horse Artillery could gallop over his body once he has tucked himself in for the night. One might, not unreasonably, expect him to know the names of the people who dwell in the house or flat to which he is attached but, until they have been in residence at least five years, the *Boab* is blissfully unaware of their existence. After five years, having got to know them more or less by sight, he rechristens them with a special *Boabic* rendering of their names. That is to say, if you happen to know that your old friends the Maxwells are in *Boab* language the Mikisvellis, the Wardlaws the Waddilows, and the Parkes the Bockskis you may with luck find out where they live and turn up only half an hour late for dinner. Otherwise you are doomed to wander round Gezira till it is time to return to breakfast and meanwhile obtain the impression that the so-called British quarter of Cairo is populated almost entirely by Czecho-Slovakians, Yugo-Slavs and Poles.

But the *Boab* has held his post in the East for some four thousand years and therefore, sure of his position in the general scheme of things, meets the intolerant irritation of the European with the same inscrutable smile that is worn by his colleague the Sphinx, the doorkeeper of the Pyramids.

## THE UNWELCOME RETURN.

BY D. T. H. McLELLAN.

'—THERE'S worse off than me : there's the twenty-pounders. Oh, laws ! you should see them taking on. Why, I've seen a man as old as you, I dessay'—(to him I seemed old)—'ah, and he had a beard too—well, and as soon as we cleared out of the river, and he had the drug out of his head—my ! how he cried and carried on ! I made a fine fool of him, I tell you ! And then there's little uns, too : oh, little by me ! I tell you I keep them in order. When we carry little uns, I have a rope's end of my own to wollop 'em.'

It was thus, as they proceeded from the house of Shaws to Queen's Ferry, that Ransome, the ship's boy on the brig *Covenant* of Dysart, introduced the unsavoury trade of kidnapping to David Balfour, who was so soon, through the machinations of his uncle, to acquire a personal acquaintance with it. The events recorded in *Kidnapped* take place, according to Robert Louis Stevenson, in 1751—(actually the Appin murder took place in 1752)—and it may appear that in choosing kidnapping, at so comparatively modern a date, as the means whereby his hero was transported from the Lothians to the scene of the murder, he was putting rather too much of a strain upon the swallowing capacity of his readers.

He was not. Actually he was understating rather than overstating the possibilities, for there was an attempt at secrecy in the trepanning of David Balfour. History is more brutal even than romance.

Between the years 1740 and 1746, the city of Aberdeen, and certain of the other seaport towns of Scotland, though they were more successful in concealing the full story of their infamy, were deeply concerned in a hideous traffic in human merchandise. Boys and girls were regularly kidnapped for sale in the American plantations. The business was engaged in quite openly, and, in certain cases, the local authorities, far from frowning upon it, or even looking the other way, actually lent their encouragement by entering into partnership with the directors of the industry. In Aberdeen, Bailie William Fordyce of Aquhorthies, Walter Cochran, the Town

Clerk Depute, Alexander Mitchell of Colphna, and many others were deeply engaged.

They had their agents throughout the city and county on the look out for likely children, or adults for that matter, and by various disreputable means, kidnapping being the chief, usually contrived that no year passed without one ship at least sailing with its human freight for the Plantations. Such a reign of terror was established that parents were afraid to let their children go into the city unaccompanied, and there are even instances on record of children having been snatched from their beds while they slept.

No doubt a great many illegitimate and unwanted children were got rid of by means of a timely word in the right quarter, but apart altogether from this source of supply, which must necessarily have been limited, the account books of the principals in the disgraceful traffic reveal an almost incredible state of matters. The books of Bailie William Fordyce and Co., for instance, contain such grim entries as these: 'To Robert Ross, for listing his son, one shilling'; and 'To MacLean, for listing his brother Donald, one shilling and sixpence.' Apparently brothers stood out for higher prices than fathers.

It is difficult for us to-day to understand the citizens of Aberdeen regularly witnessing the spectacle of droves of children being driven through the streets by keepers armed with whips, for all the world as though they were cattle on the way to the slaughter-house, and yet never venturing to interfere to secure their release and restoration to their parents.

As a rule, the human cargoes were shut up in a barn in the Green until shipping was available, but on occasion, when business was brisk, and extra accommodation was required, the public workhouse and the tolbooth were utilised, which is a proof, even if there were no other, of how deeply the magistrates of the city were involved in the traffic.

To while away the weariness of their incarceration before they were transferred on board ship, and to keep them from brooding overmuch upon their evil fate, a piper was usually hired, the *Book of Bon-Accord* tells us, to play to the prisoners; but their captors supplied other forms of entertainment as well. The books of Bailie William Fordyce and Co. contain such entries as these: 'To the boys to play at cards, 1/-'; and again, 'To the boys to drink, when put in the workhouse, 1/-.' There is one even more terrible entry: 'To Colonel Horsie, for his concubine, £1.' Who this Colonel Horsie

was we do not know, but he must have been a most public-spirited gentleman.

Mr. MacLaurin, afterwards Lord Dreghorn, who was the counsel in the Court of Session case which finally brought the foul traffic into the light of more than local publicity, thus described the scenes at the various places of imprisonment :

‘During their confinement, the parents and other relatives of those who had been enticed or forced away, flocked to Aberdeen in hopes of effecting their release—hopes which they would never have entertained had they reflected that the Town Clerk and one of the Bailies were deeply interested to thwart them. Accordingly, no solicitations or entreaties availed, and those who seemed too importunate were threatened themselves with banishment, imprisonment, and other distress. It will readily occur that it is much easier to imagine than describe the scenes which it is in proof ensued ; for nothing more piteous and moving can well be figured than to see fathers and mothers running frantic through the streets, crowding to the doors and windows of the houses where their children were incarcerated, and there giving them their blessing, taking farewell of them for ever, and departing in anguish and despair, imprecating curses upon those who were the authors of their misery.’

Of the fate of the poor children when they arrived in the Plantations the *Book of Bon-Accord* has this to say :

‘They were sold to planters for a term of years, varying from five to seven. During this period of slavery they were treated with harshness and cruelty ; they were whipped at the pleasure of their masters ; if they deserted for thirty days, twelve months was added to their slavery. In a word, such was their wretchedness, says one who was an eye-witness to their sufferings, “that they were often forced to desperate measures, and to make away with themselves.”’

We have not the means of estimating with any degree of accuracy how many children were kidnapped during the period when this abominable traffic was at its height. Not unnaturally the principals in the business, while they went about their work openly enough, and were most assuredly not ashamed of it, did not present the world with precise figures ; but one of two ships which sailed from Aberdeen in 1743, the *Book of Bon-Accord* tells us, had sixty-nine children on board, and it estimates that from 1740 to 1746, which was the period when the trade was at its brikest, at least six hundred must have been sent overseas for sale.

Fortunately one of them came back, though, so far as we know, only one, and justice, if long delayed, and not over-stern even when it arrived, overtook the kidnappers.

On November 6, 1756, Peter Williamson, a private soldier, who had been wounded and captured by the French at the siege of Oswego in North America, landed with other exchanged prisoners of war at Plymouth. He was discharged from the service of the King as unfit for drafting into another regiment by reason of his wound, and was rewarded by a grateful government, not with thanks, or a pension, or a sinecure of a post to compensate him for his sufferings, but with the handsome sum of 6s. to see him safely back to his home in Aberdeen.

They carried him as far as York, but though he had now no money in his pocket, he had in it what was every bit as useful, the manuscript account of a life that had been more than usually full of adventure. Certain charitable gentlemen of the place assisted him in the matter of getting it printed and published, and it sold to such a tune that it yielded him a net profit of £30 to smooth the road to the north.

But the good people of York did not buy his book merely because they felt sorry for a distressed soldier, wounded in America in the service of his country, they bought because they got remarkably good value for their money. *French and Indian Cruelty, exemplified in the Life and various Vicissitudes of Fortune of Peter Williamson, a disbanded Soldier, who was carried off from Aberdeen in his Infancy, and sold as a Slave in Pensylvania* makes excellent reading, and it created no little stir in the cathedral city of York, though not nearly so much as it made in the granite city of Aberdeen.

For, finding that there was money, even in misfortune when it was handled in the right way, and such considerable quantities of it that he 'began to think himself happy in having endured these misfortunes, a recital of which promised to put him in a more prosperous situation than he had ever hoped for,' Peter took a large stock of his pamphlet with him, which he proceeded to dispose of without the slightest difficulty, it being hailed with rapturous delight, especially by that not inconsiderable portion of the populace which was on bad terms with the magistracy.

In his story, Peter Williamson told how he was playing on the quay at Aberdeen with some little companions when he was enticed on board a ship called the *Planter*, which was lying alongside. She was awaiting her full complement of children, and when that was

complete she set sail. Peter was then a child of eight, 'a rough, ragged, humle-headed, long, stowie, clever boy (by which is meant a growthie boy).'

Even for those days, the *Planter* must have been an unusually slow sailer, for eleven weeks passed before she literally struck land—a sandbank off Cape May, when she was deserted in a panic by her captain and crew, the wretched children being left to their fate. The following day, however, the weather moderating, and the ship having held together, unluckily for most of the children, though not for Peter, the crew returned to rescue their human cargo, which was sold in Philadelphia for the handsome sum of £16 per head.

Peter was sold to a Scotsman, Hugh Wilson by name, who had himself been kidnapped when a child, and was treated, probably in consequence, with the utmost kindness. He was sent to school, and, on his master's death, benefited under his will to such a tune that he was able to take a farm and to marry. The farm, it is true, was rather too near the Indian territory for safety, especially as at this time the savages were being incited by the French to attack the English settlements; but for a kidnapped child to grow up to manhood at all, and not only that, but have a farm of his own and a wife, was enough to make Bailie William Fordyce, and Walter Cochran, the Town Clerk Depute, and Alexander Mitchell of Colphna demand, and with reason, had they known the horrid truth, what the world was coming to. By all the right canons of the kidnapping trade Peter ought to have been dead of overwork and over-beating and buried in some swamp years before. Even the consolation of knowing that Peter's farm was attacked by the Cherokees and burned, and he himself taken prisoner was denied them, for they did not learn about this until Peter, safely home in Scotland again, with his book published, had become a direct menace to themselves.

After many adventures which he relates at length in *French and Indian Cruelty*, Peter contrived to effect his escape from the Indians, and, as he had been given every reason for acquiring a hearty dislike of them and their little ways with the scalping-knife, he enlisted in a regiment which had been raised to fight the French and their savage allies. At the siege of Oswego, as we have seen, he was wounded and captured, and on November 6, 1756, landed at Plymouth and secured his discharge.

In all this the citizens of Aberdeen were remarkably interested. They could hardly help knowing all about the kidnapping industry, of course, but for one of the kidnapped to return home again, com-



plete with a printed account of his adventures, to the manifest confusion of the Town Clerk, and a bailie, to say nothing of other prominent citizens, was all the more delightful because it was unlooked for. Peter's exhibition of himself dressed in the garb of an American Indian attracted great crowds, and his book commanded a ready sale, though there is no record of the Town Council's having attended his show in an official capacity.

They took note of it, none the less, and of the contents of his book, for Peter was arrested and accused of having issued 'a scurrilous and infamous libel on the corporation of the city of Aberdeen, and whole members thereof.'

It is a fairly well-established maxim of war that attack is the best defence, and no doubt something of this was in the minds of the city fathers when they decided to prosecute, for it is difficult to think of them as being so a-moral as not to know that the commercial practices of certain of their number were unlikely to meet with universal applause. They had past experience too of the effectiveness of the thick stick in dealing with the refractory. When, for instance, William Jamieson, of Old Meldrum, refused to regard the kidnapping of his son philosophically, as being something in the nature of an act of God, and had the audacity to go to Edinburgh and institute an action for redress before the Lords of Session, it had been conveniently arranged that no messenger-at-arms would serve the summons upon Mr. John Burnet, merchant, who had been responsible for the child's disappearance. Bonnie Johnnie, as Mr. Burnet was familiarly called, was a great friend of theirs, and it says much for them that, in his hour of need, he did not appeal to them in vain. The child Jamieson disappeared into the wilds of Maryland and was never heard of again, while his father eventually came to realise that he was running his head against a stone wall, which was just as things should be.

But in the case of Peter Williamson, the magistrates miscalculated, though, worthy men, they are hardly to be blamed. Their experience in dealing with refractory parents gave them no pointer towards dealing with a returned kidnaped, and, unless they kidnapped Peter again, which doubtless they yearned to do, it was difficult to know how to dispose of him.

At the same time, to us to-day, it certainly appears that they would have been wiser had they done nothing at all. Though there cannot then have been many places of entertainment in Aberdeen, there was a definite limit to the time that the citizens would continue

to be amused by war-whoops, while the market for Peter's book was bound eventually to arrive at saturation-point. After that he would have had to move on elsewhere to make a living.

It was not difficult to secure Peter's conviction, the magistrates being the aggrieved parties as well as the judges. The offending pages of his book were ordered to be torn out and burned at the Market-cross by the common hangman, and the town officers, including Mr. Walter Cochran, the Town Clerk Depute, attended in state to see that it was well and truly done. In addition, Peter was ordered to crave pardon for his offence 'in the most submissive manner,' to be imprisoned in the gaol until he did so, to be fined the sum of 10s. sterling, and to be banished from the city.

And that finished the Williamson case, the magistrates thought, but they did not know Peter, and they seem to have read only those portions of his book which were specially offensive to themselves. Had they read on a little further they might have realised that the man who contrived to escape with his scalp and his life from the clutches of bloodthirsty Red Indians was hardly likely to be put down by a parcel of Aberdeen bailies.

Peter set out for Edinburgh to see whether there was any justice at all left in Scotland, and there his case was taken up by certain charitable individuals, who found kidnapping, even when conducted decently and in order, with the full approval of a Town Council, a trifle too strong for their stomachs.

In the Court of Session, in the case '*Peter Williamson v. Cushnie and others*,' by interlocutor of February 2, 1762, the judges gave a unanimous verdict in favour of Williamson, and condemned the provost, four bailies, and the dean of guild, jointly to pay a fine of £100 sterling, the fine to be paid to Peter by way of compensation for his wrongful incarceration in Aberdeen. They were also found liable for the whole of the expenses of the process, amounting to £80. But, most unkindest cut of all, these worthies were made personally liable for these sums, the Lords of Session expressly declaring that 'the same shall be no burden upon the town of Aberdeen.'

But if the magistrates of Aberdeen did not know Peter Williamson when they undertook his prosecution, neither did the Lords of Session know the magistrates of Aberdeen when they made them personally liable for the fine and expenses in the Williamson case. The thought of paying good money out of their own pockets was so repulsive to them that they considered appealing to the House of Lords, and were only dissuaded from making the venture by the

Earl of Findlater, the patron of the town. He assured them that the sympathies of any court were nearly certain to be with Williamson, a fact which, oddly enough, appears to have escaped the city fathers. But, being a kindly soul, he did not merely throw cold water on their proposed further litigation, he was ready with an alternative. He was at this time Lord High Admiral of Scotland, and had appointed the magistrates of Aberdeen his Admirals Depute on their part of the coast. It was the rule that from time to time account was called of monies received for the salvage of wrecked vessels, but no such demand was ever made upon the magistrates, who were directed to apply such sums as were received from this source to the common good of the town. The Earl now came to the rescue of the magistrates and ordered that the fine and expenses in the Williamson case be paid out of the salvage money, which, it need scarcely be added, was done. Kennedy's *Annals of Aberdeen* is the authority for this sidelight upon the art of using the Common Good to the fullest possible personal advantage.

The provost and magistrates having been thus successfully disposed of, Peter Williamson, armed with the names of those who had been personally responsible for his kidnapping so many years before—they had been divulged during the course of the process against the Town Council—proceeded to raise an action for damages against Bailie William Fordyce and others. They were protected by an Act of Indemnity from a criminal action for plagium, or child-stealing, but not against a civil suit. The sum he claimed as solatium was very considerable, for he estimated his losses and sufferings at £2,000. As it was likely to be a lengthy and expensive case, Bailie Fordyce craftily suggested that it would be better for both parties if they had no dealings with the Court of Session at all, but submitted the matter to arbitration instead. To this Peter agreed, and the process was temporarily withdrawn, the Sheriff-Substitute of Aberdeenshire, James Forbes of Shiels, being appointed arbiter.

This gentleman, though his knowledge of the law may have been profound, was better known for his convivial habits, and both parties proceeded to see to it that he was adequately stimulated when engaged upon his arduous duties as arbiter. In the end the bailie's hospitality won the day, and after delivering his judgment, exonerating Bailie Fordyce and his fellow criminals, the Sheriff retired to bed 'very merry and jocose,' where he slept all the next day 'being Sunday, dead drunk and speechless.'

The Lords of Session, however, got wind of this convivial method of securing favourable judgments, and decided to reopen the case. One of the witnesses called before them spoke to having seen the Sheriff-Substitute on the bench 'when he appeared to be ree, and as if he had been drunk the night before,' and this and the weight of evidence which Peter was able to produce that he was the actual Peter Williamson who had been kidnapped when a child through the machinations of the wicked bailie and his partners, secured a decision in his favour. On December 3, 1768, he was awarded the sum of £200 damages, and, in addition, the costs of his litigation, amounting to one hundred guineas. It seems a small enough sum, and it is the gravest of pities that the Act of Indemnity protected Bailie William Fordyce and his partners from criminal action, and the hanging they so richly deserved.

#### AFTER-WORD.

As one that westward followeth the sun  
From barrier-bar to barrier-bar of eve  
May still press on, though endlessly outrun—

So, though my step has lost your fleeter one,  
Shall I abide the dark, for as you leave  
A warmth to whisper, 'This way she has gone ;'

With steadfast faith that if I sleep, anon  
Your touch will waken me, and I perceive  
That this, which was the sunset, is the dawn.

WILLARD R. ESPY.

*Washington, D.C.*

## KNIGHT'S MOVE.

BY W. M. LETTS.

URSULA MALLISON was writing a letter at her husband's desk. She smiled as she wrote it and referred often to the sheets of notepaper at her side. She was answering a letter point by point. The letter and her own reply absorbed her mind. She did not pause for a word, but sometimes she became thoughtful and looked at the bowl of daffodils on the bookcase or at the window which crowned her with spring sunshine.

She lived too much in a world of ideas to set much store by her own grace. She would have raised pretty eyebrows had anyone noticed the poise of her head as it bent over the pad. Forty-five years had left very few grey hairs in the dark smooth hair that was brushed back to meet the coil at her neck. She did not know that the word 'rare,' so carelessly used by our poetic forbears, did indeed fit her body and spirit.

When she looked at the daffodils she raised golden eyes that were luminous. Her profile, aureoled in the light of the window, had a fine regularity. Her slim neck was the stem of a flower for one who had eyes.

But for these facts about herself Ursula cared little. Only for her figure, still so slight and straight, did she take much heed. The carnal pleasure of potatoes she avoided consciously, but food did not interest her. Indeed no process of growth concerned her at all. Only conscience drove her to her kitchen each day and she prized initiative of all things in her two servants. That she had married a man whose interests were centred in patent manures amused her. The fact was ironic. Never had wife less concern with manure. She ignored all the ugly and lowly factors of body-making with fastidious disregard. Nature, whether in mercy or in revenge, had given her no child for whom she must endure bodily abasement.

She accepted her husband's tasks and his work cheerfully. He had removed her from a home that she disliked, from a mother and sister who chafed every instinct and taste. She was grateful, too keenly grateful to regret her haste in acceptance. She owed to

him that cool freedom of spirit wherein she passed her married life.

Even here in his study she felt at peace. The big orderly desk with its pad of virgin blotting-paper welcomed her. As usual, Matthew had gone off to his office at Mallison's Chemical Manures and he would be happy, she knew, in that business of helping growth, that carnal affair which she found so dull.

'Flowers are lovely,' she said; 'why should I want to know their low taste in food?'

'But it is not low, it is merely chemical,' he would protest laughingly. 'Now if you could appreciate sewage . . .'

'I can't, Matthew. I want to forget it. I can make it non-existent that way.'

'My dear, you're no gardener. Manure is beautiful to a gardener.'

'No, I merely love flowers.'

The memory of this short sparring match came back to her now. Her husband's fame for manures was a gay jest between her and the friend to whom she wrote weekly or oftener. This letter-writing was her happiest interest, her only means of self-expression unless she arranged flowers or played her piano. Often she wondered how the years had been spent before she found herself and her friend in this temperate world of letters.

It had begun with the note of a grateful reader to a journalist whose page in a weekly review was a well-known feature. This dealt with the affairs of the day philosophically, often wittily. The journalist received many letters and one could not say why Ursula's held his attention. He replied at some length, his interest piqued by the unknown writer. He put a question that made her write again. Then he must send the latest book on the eternal problem of Dean Swift. The book was read and returned, and so, gracefully, and faster and faster the shuttlecock of mutual interest tossed between them.

She herself would have never wished to meet him, but unexpectedly the meeting came one summer day in Chelsea. She had gone, unwillingly, to a friend's reception. She disliked the crush of strangers and had withdrawn, solitary and eager to escape, to a corner of the tea-room. There, cup in hand, she was examining a Japanese print. That, at least, pleased her. She did not know that she herself in delicate colouring and fine drawing was like the print. So Roger Cassilis thought as he was hurried by his hostess to meet her.



'My friend Mrs. Mallison is here. You and she will have so much in common. You're just the two people who must meet to-day. She is rather shy or perhaps just aloof. I shall feel happy about her if you'll look after her.'

Then, as she saw Ursula, this managing kind lady swept down upon her.

'Ah! Ursula, my dear, I want to introduce Mr. Cassilis. You know him well as Cassius of the *Piccadilly Review*. Mr. Cassilis, you and Mrs. Mallison will have a thousand things in common and I shall leave you happily while I look after a dozen or so dull people.'

Off she buzzed, a large beneficent bee. And so they met. Ursula's face flushed a little with surprise, then she said quickly: 'Yes, of course, this is you. I think I'd have known you without an introduction.'

He held her hand and looked down into the strange, luminous eyes.

'And of course I knew I should meet you,' he said with a laugh, 'I was reluctant to come and then kind Fate told me I should be rewarded and I came. Now I see a long garden chair outside and you and I have everything to talk about.'

'Everything,' she repeated and smiled up at him.

. . . . .

That meeting had taken place three years ago and it had been followed by letters that were now weekly events, and by many meetings in London. Always they were decorous affairs, almost like the advances, the set to corners of a formal dance, or the considered moves of a chess-board. Often to theatre or concert she brought a schoolgirl niece, who, considering them dear old fogeys, ignored the depth of their intercourse.

In private they had names for each other. He was Cassius, his pen-name. To him she was Monna Lisa. No, he protested, she was not like the da Vinci picture. But she was enigmatic, blessedly impersonal; to all ages she would go her thoughtful way with composed tread. She laughed because no man had ever summed up her qualities. Of her husband they both talked often. As they sat in the quiet little tea-places he knew how to find, she told him of Matthew's interest, the chemical manure business that he had worked up so valiantly, till "*Mallison's Manures*" were listed in every garden catalogue.

'Well I know it,' he said; 'you know I have a cottage and a

precious garden not far from Hayward's Heath in the Bolney direction.'

'Our cottage is in Essex, in a quiet flat place that does not hurt one with beauty. Matthew is a keen gardener—I'm none, but I love flowers.'

So far had the intimacy progressed on this spring day when Ursula was writing at her husband's desk. When the door bell rang the maid brought a message to her. Two of her friends were at the door in a car. They wanted her to go out. Very hastily she wrote on the envelope and enclosed her letter, then off she went, eager for the drive.

They were sitting beside the drawing-room fire, Matthew a little dreamy over his pipe, Ursula reading the week's reviews, when he spoke:

'That was a great letter that fellow wrote you. Does he often write like that?'

Ursula raised flowerlike head from her paper.

'What fellow? What letter? I'm too sleepy for guessing-games.'

'The one you left on my blotter. It seemed to be left for me to read, so I read it. I concluded Monna Lisa was you and the chap signed himself Cassius.'

'Yes. That's all very dull.'

'Not at all dull. Why haven't you told me about him before?'

'Dear, I have told you quite often that I've met Mr. Cassilis in town. I met him in Chelsea. You just weren't interested.'

'I just didn't know about him. Why don't you have him here?'

'Oh! I don't know. I didn't think he'd amuse you.'

'But he amuses you. You must be very friendly to write letters like that. He admires you, I gather.'

'Does he? Just because he's not my husband.'

'Why this cynicism? Do you think I don't admire you?'

'My dear Matt, why are we talking like this? I don't know if you admire me . . . you just accept me as part of life, a daily event. I'm quite happy in that. It's just the blessed common-placeness of marriage. It's restful. I like it.'

'But you like these letters?'

'Of course I do. Intellectually his mind appeals to me.'

'It does to me too. It's marvellous that a man can write like that. I can't write letters. I can only type out necessary informa-

tion and orders. With a typewriter I feel happy. You can type hard facts. You couldn't type that sort of a letter. I like the gardening bits about his rock garden. He says he's growing *Eritrichium Nanum* and tells you to read Farrar on it. Farrar is too romantic for me. But I wonder if he really will grow it. It's a devil to grow in this country.'

Ursula went back to her review. The subject was closed for her, there seemed nothing more to say. She had, by accident, left the letter from Cassilis in the study. Matthew had read it. No harm was done. She was Caesar's wife. But she felt rather as one who sees her garden invaded by a well-meaning but heavy-heeled cart horse.

. . . . .

She met Cassilis in town at a picture exhibition.

'You have fascinated my husband,' she said as they walked to her station, 'he read your last letter. I forgot I'd left it on his desk. But he was absorbed in it, especially the bit about a rock plant.'

'*Eritrichium Nanum* ?'

'Yes, I hate those names. But he knew it at once. He can't believe that you'll make it flower.'

'Oh ! but I shall. I'm holding my breath over it. Watch my page in the review. I'll tell you when it's out. He's a useful man your husband.'

'Of course he is, but why specially ?'

'Those manures. Tell him I was reading all about them in my catalogue. It's a wonderful thing to get all the factors of plant food without tons of very messy manure.'

'You too ? Must we talk manure ?'

'Not with you, I'd like to with him. It's odd how a taste in common is a sort of Sesame spell. It opens up so much. Creeds and Colours and Politics don't count for anything at a horse race or a Rugger match.'

'You mean you're both gardeners ?'

'Yes.'

'Then I'm not and I'm an outsider ?' she asked ruefully.

'Never. We bring you the perfect achievement.'

She smiled at him, that strange, slightly ironic smile.

. . . . .

Ursula was in bed nursing a cold. It was Saturday and the day

was too raw and wet for the Essex cottage or for Matthew's golf. He had been turning out drawers in the study.

The maid came in with a tray to Ursula's room.

'There's a gentleman with the master,' she said; 'I took their tea to the study.'

'Did you catch the name?'

'No, ma'am, the gentleman asked for you. Then master came out and spoke to him and they went into the study.'

'Very good, Kate. I'm glad the master was here.'

An hour passed, two hours. Her room seemed rather forlorn. The electric fire and her bedside light did not quite banish the gloom of the wet spring day. Ursula felt lonely and forgotten. Her cherished aloofness was a poor cloak now against the east wind of indifference. Matthew must have forgotten her. Cassilis had not written for some days. Tears trickled down her cheeks. At last the door opened. Matthew came in. He held a pot in his hands. He held it reverently.

'Look!' he exclaimed, 'he says you must see it.'

'What? Oh! a little blue flower.'

'It's *Eritrichium Nanum*. He's grown it, no deception. He let it alone for weeks and then he gave it water in a teaspoon.'

'It's pretty. But I can't see anything so very exciting. And who is *he*?'

'Your friend Cassilis, of course. He's down in the study. We've had a great jaw. I'm bringing him over the works next week.'

'He'll be interested.'

'Yes, he's awfully keen. I take to that fellow. He is a quaint sort of chap, but I like him. You don't know what an achievement this pot is. Processes don't interest you. He says he'll write up manures in his next article.'

'You seem to be getting on remarkably well. Knight approaches knight and poor pawn is forgotten.'

Matthew did not notice his wife's remark.

'You need a bigger shawl. Wait, I'll put a rug round you.' Clumsily he wrapped her up. 'There! By the way, do you want to see him? He's dining somewhere, so it will only be for a minute.'

Ursula shut her eyes and leaned back on her pillow.

'No, I'll try to sleep. Give him some nice message.'

'Very well. He's in a hurry, and he might catch your cold.'

Matthew went off. She heard him going downstairs. From under her eyelashes two tears globed and fell.

On a May evening Ursula dressed for dinner. She was attentive to the long glass. A certain eagerness had for once caught hold of her. She and Cassilis had seen the dress in a window.

'That is *you*,' he had said and stopped.

'Nonsense! I hate spending much on clothes. Translate that price into books.'

'No, not this time. That is your dress. When you wear it you'll be *Iris Stylosa*.'

'Oh! your long names.'

'But therein is the point. The *Iris Stylosa* blooms in winter. It comes out rarely, magically, perfect in dress and scent, that is if slugs don't bite off its head. You must wear that dress. Have you jade beads? If not, you must have them.'

'Yes, I have jade.'

'Very well. Then go in and get that dress.'

She had obeyed. Now she put the dress over her head and slipped into it. How wise he had been. In justice she must admit the reflection she saw was lovely. What would he think when she met him? She was going alone. Matthew had a meeting. She hurried down to her Tube station carrying her green silk slippers under her cloak. Her friend in Chelsea, self-congratulatory at having made the friendship, had asked her to meet Cassilis at dinner.

With a little flush of pleasure and very bright eyes Ursula went into the drawing-room. Her friend was alone. She looked harassed.

'Ursula, my dear . . . oh! how lovely you do look. Your wonderful figure! What a perfect dress. I think I've never realised what a beauty you are. Have you heard this terrible news about our poor friend?'

Ursula was always collected, always armed for assault.

'What friend and what news? I know nothing, Betty.'

'Poor Mr. Cassilis. He's had a motor accident this morning coming back from Sussex. He skidded. Wasn't his man good to ring me up? I've got my solicitor in a hurry to dine here, you'll be nice to him I know.'

'Is the accident serious?'

'They're not sure yet. I know he meant a lot to you, Ursula

dear, and I shall understand if you want to go away at once or if you want to cry.'

Ursula's face hardened.

'But of course not. He's a very pleasant acquaintance, yes, a friend to both Matthew and me. That seems no reason not to have my dinner.'

Later they were in the drawing-room taking coffee when a maid summoned Ursula to the telephone. Matthew was speaking: 'I'll call for you in half an hour. I've just read this news about Cassilis. I can't be easy till I go to the hospital and enquire for him. I'll bring you the latest news.'

At ten o'clock an agitated Matthew appeared.

'They think he'll get over it. I saw the doctor. I've been so upset thinking of the poor chap. I can't forget how nicely he wrote about the Manure works—quite poetical, wasn't it? We can't spare men like that.'

A week passed. Ursula found a consolation in Maytime in town. It did not irk her as it did her husband. He insisted that he must go to the Essex cottage for a quiet Sunday.

'And I shall stay here and go down to Kew with sandwiches and a book,' she said.

She was glad that she had stayed, for a telephone message came to her on Monday morning from the hospital where Cassilis was making a difficult recovery. She was told that Mr. Cassilis would like to see her if she could call. She promised, her face shining. Maytime had put zest into life. She had written letters but had not expected an answer. All that her Cassius meant of interest, of definition in a world that she found vague, had dawned upon her lately. She went cheerfully to the hospital.

There, bewildered by corridor and stairs, she felt an ant in a strange ant-hill.

At last she found a nurse to help her.

Yes, she could see Mr. Cassilis. A gentleman had just come in to see him, but he could have two visitors without harm.

Ursula went into the little ward. Two men sat with heads bent over a tray. It was covered with little Alpines, things jewelled and delicate. For a perceptible time neither noticed her. Then Cassilis looked up.

'Mrs. Mallison! This is jolly. And your husband turned up five minutes ago, bearing me gifts to shame the three Wise Men. Isn't he great to guess the very thing to put life into me?'



Ursula put her big bunch of tulips on the washstand unnoticed.

'And you're both rolling out long names at each other?'

Matthew stood up and said he must go. Cassilis protested.

'You must both stay and have tea. This is splendid. Three isn't trumpery, it's the perfect triangle, the shamrock—I'll write a paragraph on tea for three when my arm mends. I've never felt happier at seeing you two dear people.'

But Matthew protested that he had an engagement. He laid a brotherly, indifferent hand on Ursula's shoulder.

'Here's someone much more amusing,' he declared, 'but don't you tire him, Ursula. We must be careful still.'

Ursula took his chair. Cassilis watched the outgoing figure, waved his hand, then turned to smile at her.

'How good life is,' he said, 'when one has nearly lost it. I lie here and think of my riches. You are part and parcel of all good, Monna Lisa, and now you've given me a brother. I was an only child and I always used to envy boys with brothers. Now I've got one—and all through you. I don't quite know what it is about that nice man of yours that takes me so much—some affinity. He's so quaint, so . . . —ah! here's Nurse with tea. You shall pour out. And then will you let me dictate an article on the blessings of a motor accident?'

Ursula smiled at him.

'You don't want to play chess?' she asked.

'No, I've forgotten even the moves. What does a knight do? Something queer and sideways, isn't it?'

She looked at him with those long luminous eyes which concealed her thoughts.

'He does something unexpected,' she said; 'it used to frighten me. But now—tea. No milk and one lump of sugar, I know it.'

'How well you understand me,' he said and sighed in the comfort of it.

## MICHAEL'S DAM.

BY GEOFFREY LAPAGE.

WE had cycled over from Exeter in a mizzle of cold rain—not an easy ride, but a struggling pleasure of overcoming mist and chilling mud. We were not very cheery; news had come that the paper mill, in which we had put nearly everything we had, was not doing well and might very soon close down. We could only hope; and the dreary weather did not encourage that; it seemed to conspire with our bicycles to land us in the mud.

But the sun did shine out now and then. It burst from a cloud just as we turned into a muddy lane that ended in a farm; and there was Michael greeting us, a windmill of gumbooted energy, waving both arms and vociferating, out of his cheeky brown adorable face: 'Uncle, come and see my dam! Auntie—oo! It's spiffing that you've come. Leave your bikes and come and see my dam!'

It was kindly of Father and Mother to murmur, 'Yes, dear; after tea.' We were wet and tired, and tea sounded very good, but Michael had no other thought than dams.

'Oh, Uncle isn't keen on tea!' he cried. 'Are you, Uncle? Auntie, don't you *want* to see my dam?'

There wasn't any choice for us after that, and anyhow Michael grabbed our handlebars; he shoved our bikes against the nearest wall. Snatching our hands in each of his muddy fists, he tugged us, squelching, through the muddy yard, his tousled head bent eagerly as, panting, he explained about the dam.

It was in a place called Assouan, at the other side of the field behind the farm, where a belt of oak trees grew along a muddy little brook. He pulled us over the sodden field towards this unknown land. It was noted for its peril of quick death. But Michael was with us; he knew all the ropes. When we got to the dangerous river-bank, he dropped our hands and splashed into the dam. The crocodiles and water snakes he scattered with a yell. Astride the dam like a Gulliver, he issued his commands without a pause.

'Uncle! You collect the stones. Auntie, I shall have to show you how to build a dam. You see, you get the mud like this and slap it on and so cement the stones. It's going to be the bestest dam that people ever made.'

It was crisis—this; not a moment to be lost. The lives of all the settlers hung upon the threatened dam. It glistened there between his legs like the greasy carcase of a sleeping seal. Below it a pool, about six feet wide, was full of oozy soup; above it the blocked and cheated stream was spilling in the sulks upon the field. Michael ignored it; we could see it patiently assembling all its might.

We bent to the task. It was evident that we were awful mugs. Michael was splashing everywhere, a rhapsodising windmill of delight. The world was loud with the squelchy whacks of gobbets of mud as we slapped them into place. The need was furious, vital, dire. There were thousands of women, Michael said, and children, too, and cattle and all that, whose lives depended on our energies. We soon were soaked, not only with our anxious sweat, but with the mud that Michael scattered in his frantic joy. Our paper mill was like this dam. Somewhere up north a band of men were working just like us, bolstering up that mill against a cruel patient stream. Would they succeed? 'Look, Uncle! See, it's bursting there! Oh, Auntie! You're so slow!' And back of it all, like an aching tooth, the grown-up knowledge that the stream would win.

But Michael did not know all that—not yet, poor little soul! As fast as the brook washed down his work, he built it up again with laughing faith. What a jewel was youth, before you learnt that dolls were—dressed in rags! Yet were they always? Cows were coughing in the gathering mist; a blackbird scuttered, chuckling, through the shadowed hawthorn hedge. Animals, too, were all like Michael; they hadn't seen themselves. Would Michael some day meet that fatal mirror and give in? We smothered the thought with gobs of mud. All hands to the threatened dam!

That night it rained without a break and the darkness hid the triumph of the stream.

'Poor kid!' said Uncle. 'Won't he be fed up!'

But the only thing that Michael said was: 'Uncle, Auntie! Let's go out and build another dam!'

Shades of Ulysses! Could we explain that our paper mill had

gone down with his dam? We hadn't the heart; we let him tug us back to all that mud.

The strange thing is that we managed it. We tamed that patient stream in spite of all. In fact, not even all these recent storms have yet destroyed the dam we made. It's hard to believe, but it looks as if we learnt a lot from Michael and his dam.

*A MIDDLE-AGED POEM.*

WHEN the unwary heart has run  
His scale of sorrows up and down,  
Sweet is the sitting in the sun  
To watch the daylight and the town,  
And harboured on some eminence  
Survey, secure, the fields of sense.

There all the inevitable years,  
Grown shallow as a mountain brook,  
Lose their grim panoply of fears:  
The Future, at whose step youth shook,  
Fantastic as a shadow play  
Is now at one with Yesterday.

Now phantoms passionless of woe  
Are dim as joys; in sisterwise,  
There, in the garland long ago  
Entwined, their mingled blossom lies—  
So frail the flowers, none would guess  
Their chalice held unhappiness.

The light shines on the loosened chain.  
These meek and faded visions bear  
Their burden of dead loss and gain  
Discreetly in the upper air.  
And sovereign conscience moves at last  
In quiet freedom through his past.

FREYA STARK.

## WHY THE BIRDS SING.

A RED INDIAN LEGEND.

BY GRACE JACKSON.

WHEN the Red Men, fleeing before the waters of the Great Flood, sought refuge on their highest mountain peaks, the beasts and birds they saved with them had no voices. No one remembers to-day why the coyotes howl, nor do they know how the mountain lion got his blood-curdling scream; but the loon's lament, and the sad little song of the redwings, are clearly the result of the hole in Nakimu's bag, and the subsequent loss of its contents. And Koko, the old black crow, was the cause of it all.

The forest had grown up again, and the rivers were running in their proper channels. It was early summer, and the sun was high. Tempered though they were by the tall trees, his rays were all-powerful, and Koko, perched on one of the branches of a big pine, was almost asleep.

Meanwhile, Nakimu, the Maker of Songs, trudged wearily along a narrow, winding trail. He was dusty, and hot, for he had travelled far that day—and he still had far to go, for the sweetness of his songs had brought him fame, and the head-chief of a distant, conquering tribe desired to hear them. The message sent to Nakimu's master could not be ignored. The sender of it was one who would brook no delay. And therefore, in the heat of the June day, Nakimu kept on.

He carried his songs in a leather bag, slung across his back, as a squaw carried her papoose. They grew heavier, and heavier, and heavier, until at last he was forced to pause and draw breath for awhile. He lay down in the shade of a big tree, the precious bag by him. Fragrant pine needles received his tired body. In all the green forest there was no sound to disturb him; and in less time than it takes to narrate it, he was deeply asleep.

Why he should have chosen for the scene of his slumbers the roots of the tree whereon Koko perched was, perhaps, a coincidence. Perhaps, on the other hand, it was no coincidence at all, but part

of the Manitou's (God's) plan. Be that as it may, the old black crow woke as the minstrel lay down.

Now Koko, as everyone knows, is the most inquisitive and, above all, the most greedy of birds.

When he had recovered from his first surprise (for travellers through the forest were as rare as the flowers of a pine-tree) his filmy gaze fell upon the deerskin bag.

In his youth, Koko had followed the migrations of a wandering tribe. He had feasted royally among the hanging tassels of the maize-fields, robbing the long husks of their golden store. He was familiar with the ways of the tribesmen, and he knew that when journeying they packed their provision with them in just such bags as the one by the side of the unconscious brave below him. He remembered the nut-like flavour of the stolen delicacy, and his round eye glistened.

Nakimu lay with one arm flung across the tempting bag, and his brown hand looked dangerously strong and swift.

Koko fluttered to the ground and surveyed it, with his head on one side.

Nakimu grunted, stirred under the influence of some fleeting dream, turned over on to his back, and withdrew the guardian hand.

Koko, seizing his chance, hopped up to the bag and began pecking at the hide with his long curved beak.

It was tough, and several seconds elapsed before he managed to pierce a hole in it. He persevered bravely, keeping one eye on the sleeping Nakimu, and at last he succeeded.

But—what was this! *Something* came out of the hole and lodged in his reluctant throat. He choked, and a harsh sound issued from it. Terrified now, he flew back to his lofty perch and watched from there, shivering, as Nakimu woke.

From the hole in the leather bag strange objects were escaping fast. Insubstantial as moonbeams they were—many-coloured as the spray in the river falls—airy as dreams. But what frightened Koko was the sound that came with them. It filled the whole forest, and echoed from the rocky face of the mountain beyond it, throbbing among the tree-tops, rising and falling, now clamorous, now soft as a murmured prayer. Poor Nakimu could have wept as he heard it. All his glorious songs gone, and for ever! But no—not *quite* all! Several, and among them his sweetest, still lingered, as though loth to leave him who had given them their being. And as he realised this, he conceived his great idea.





th  
p  
b  
h

u  
h  
h

or  
li  
K  
m

b

so  
to

th  
an  
ca

w  
cr  
of  
m  
he  
so

It was hopeless to try to recapture the lost songs. Even those that remained near him, having once tasted freedom, would scarcely permit themselves to be smothered again in his deerskin bag, to be brought forth at intervals only. Possibly, however—at least, he decided to try it.

Assembling the startled birds, he propounded his idea. Rather unwillingly, half-fearful of the consequences, they consented to help him out. In an agony he looked on, as each chose the song he liked best, but all went well.

The obedient songs behaved beautifully. All the birds took one—a few, of course, were sweeter than the others, since Nakimu, like all minstrels, had made some that were not quite perfection. Koko, seeing their delight in this new accomplishment, tried to make his voice heard too.

‘Caw! Caw!’ was all that came forth when he opened his beak, for he had injured his song when he pecked at the bag.

At the discordant sound, Nakimu and the birds looked up.

‘The thief! The thief!’ cried Nakimu, recognising his spoilt song. The old crow fled, pursued by all the angry birds; and to this day his only voice is harsh and disagreeable to the ear.

As for the songs that escaped and refused to come back for the birds’ throats, the trees caught a great many. They hid them among their branches for the winds to play with, and these we can always hear.

The west wind chooses the gentle, harmonious ones. In winter, when the gales sweep down from the north, great symphonies and crashing chords come sounding from them; but the wildest songs of all escaped farthest, to the rocky coasts of the wide seas. Their music when the winds are high spell danger to those who may hear it; and wisest is he who turns deaf ears to their thunderous sounds, and seeks the quieter melodies of the shore.

## IN THE FRESHNESS OF THEIR YOUTH.

BY J. S. COLTART.

THOUGH we had slept on our valises on a brick floor in a dismal hamlet called Nodde Boom, the day opened with a promise of variety. Mac, our Company Commander (considerably older than we were, an ancient gent of possibly thirty-five, and an autocrat of immense potentialities), told us at breakfast that we would be inspected *en route* by Kitchener.

Mac had been *difficile* for the last two days, following a public and spectacular row with the Adjutant and the Colonel's subsequent decision in favour of the Adjutant: things had accordingly been 'ard on us.' But all went well on this the morning of the move: we paraded our platoons on time, in full equipment, and our billets were found to be clean, and eventually the Battalion moved off in the coolness of the morning.

I liked the look of Merville when we passed through it: a much older town than any we had been connected with of late, but the march gave no chance of seeing much of it. The Brigadier caused some unpleasantness in the Transport by stopping the wagons and having all the covers opened up: here were revealed, amongst other iniquities, two wire beds, the property of the Colonel and the Adjutant respectively. 'Throw these into the field!' the General commanded. Chips, the Transport officer, circulated this bulletin at the first halt, to the general delectation—particularly of Mac, who completely cheered up. Other accumulations of unauthorised baggage had been sent forward by another road in 'the Colonel's trap.'

As we ascended the small hill on which stood Hinges we had left Flanders, with its flats and rich cultivation, behind us, for what proved to be a sojourn of two years in Artois and Picardy, till the battle flared up again at Ypres in 1917. We passed through the village of Hinges and south of it met the largest array of the Great that it had yet been our lot to meet. They were massed in a field opposite the windmill, legions of brass hats. Kitchener stood up head and shoulders above them, taking the salute: with him were our Brigade and Divisional Commanders, Sir Douglas Haig,

First Army, and General Gough, First Corps, in the offing. I gave the necessary salutes and received a polite acknowledgment.

Our billets were below the hill in Vendin-lez-Béthune: we marched into the village and found our mess in a doctor's house, pleasantly set back from the road. The Company billeting officer greeted us with, 'I say, did you see old Kitch?'—and was suitably reproved by Mac. Directly the troops were settled in, billets inspected, teas supplied (for it was now evening), and all the rest of it, Graham, Charlie and I applied for permission to go in to Béthune for dinner. Mac was not yet disposed towards festivity, and had some acid words on the subject of subalterns and their ideas of duty, and had we inspected our men's feet? We had, and as Kenneth (our second-in-command) said he was coming with us, no further serious objections could be raised. So off we sped.

We got a lift on an anti-aircraft lorry and swept down the tree-shaded road and saw the towers of Béthune standing up on the hill-top of the town, radiant with the evening sun: then over a level crossing (PN Industriel) and in to the town. Somebody seemed to know where to dine: it was one of the odd circumstances of these days that one might go to a strange place, town or trench, and there was always someone among us who seemed to know something about it. *Au Paon d'Or* received our custom on this occasion, and about half the officers of the Battalion seemed to drift in during the evening. Our wants were attended to by three sisters—Eugénie, tall and slender, Marie, plain but vivacious, Eléanor, short and plump: Madame cooked, and M. le Patron supervised the drinks. This was the first civilised meal away from the Company Mess for many a long month: here were clean table appointments, glasses, gas light in good order: even Armentières in all its glory was not arrayed like that.

Béthune stands on the western end of a ridge of high ground: the Aire—La Bassée Canal lies in the low ground on the north, the railway station at about the same level on the south. The centre of the town was a jumble of narrow tortuous streets which found their way to La Grand'Place, but newer streets on sweeping lines, with squares and ordered trees, were laid out on the sloping ground on all sides. The shops were crowded together in the rue des Treilles, in the rue Sadi Carnot, and round the Grand'Place: prominent in the Place was the *Globe Café* where everyone resorted in the afternoons, and where mutual acquaintances in that part of the front were pretty sure to meet sooner or later. The industrial

part of the town was concentrated in the side nearest the trenches, where, among other activities, there was a tobacco factory: for being near a coal-mining district and having some twenty thousand inhabitants, it was a busy town.

The belfry dominated the Grand'Place, with the great tower of St. Waast behind. The belfry was a fourteenth-century stone tower, with a clock and sundial, and there was a cluster of houses and shops round its base: it was surmounted by a quaint wooded spire which held a peal of bells, mellow and pleasant to hear: one was named *la Joyeuse*. There were delightful old houses round the square, but I loved above all the tumbled sea of tiled roofs at the end of the rue Sadi Carnot: they were a great expanse of old red sun-baked pin-tiles, set off at all kinds of angles to each other, and in the evenings they were gilded by the setting sun. Added to this there were many dignified and cool houses standing back from the side streets, with small flagged courtyards shaded by vines and wistaria, with their windows open to the cool of the evening.

The great church of St. Waast stood in one of these side streets. It had an immense brick tower, one of the finest of its kind that I have ever seen: it had the remains of vaulting for a narthex porch above the shabby west doorway. It grieves me to think that I never rightly appreciated this noble church: I was as yet unaccustomed to ancient brickwork and largely blind to its charm: I was also prejudiced against the interior decorations, the altar furniture and shrines. But internally it was a great and lofty church, with tall slender pillars dividing off the aisles, a shallow open apse, and richly groined roof.

The Hôtel de France, the principal hostelry of the town, was situated near the Place St. Eloi (where was the church), and across an open street was the Hôtel des Genevières, a handsome town house standing behind a walled courtyard. Below this the streets of the town fell away among old stone houses and trim pollarded limes, beyond the vestiges of the old walls to the low parts beside the railway station, near where was the open-air swimming bath, which we soon discovered and where we spent blissful afternoons, taking for sustenance water melons and sweet yellow grapes.

I am at a loss to explain all that Béthune was to mean to us. We saw its towers standing high above the roofs from miles away in all directions: we would approach it by the Avenue Sully, closely lined with tall poplars, or along the Allée des Marronniers, where dark chestnut-trees made it cool and fresh from the dust and heat



of the roads outside : or we might enter it in its least attractive east end, coming from the trenches up the Beuvry road, but in all times and seasons its welcome was gracious and friendly. But we saw little of all this on our first night in the town : we dined and returned to our billets fairly early, a cheerful party.

The next visit was after a double trip in the line, first north and then south of the Canal, at Givenchy and Cuinchy respectively. On relief we moved back to billets in Béthune. At the end of a long communication trench we came out among the cottages at Cambrin (in these days reliefs in that part of the line were carried out in daylight), where there were pre-War enamelled road signs of the Automobile Club de France showing the distances to Béthune one way and La Bassée and Lille the other : which everyday notices seemed rather pathetic in the circumstances. We marched on the *pavé* under the partially damaged trees and past the Brigade Headquarters in the chemist's shop, through Annequin, then to the bend in the road, and what had been called 'the long drear La Bassée road' stretched away ahead of us. But it was a beautiful summer evening : the trees were as yet mainly undamaged, the red blaes of the footpath was not dreary, there was a busy flow of traffic to and from the trenches, and above all we were returning to Béthune : so, despite the flat lands stretching away on the left towards Saily-Labourse and Nœux-les-Mines and the intermittent slag-hills, that road provided more cheerful associations which even the months of the coming winter could not displace.

Beuvry stood up in front of us and the sun was beginning to set when we marched through its streets, and it was getting dark when we finally reached our billets in Béthune. Battalion Headquarters was installed with much honour in the Hôtel des Genevières, but Graham and I did not covet their splendour for we found ourselves in one of those delightful houses near the church. I had a large well-furnished bedroom, clean fresh sheets scented with lavender, and the quiet sounds of the town came in through the open window. But we knew it was too good to last long : an orderly appeared in the room early next morning with a message to the effect that we would move to Obblinghem and that I would be a billeting officer. I departed sadly and after an arduous morning we settled down in a miserable timber and wattle little farm-holding : complete with muck heap and all that went with it, smell and flies.

Then Béthune received us for a notable two weeks' rest and refitment after the battle of Loos. That confused action had left our

Company scathless : the attack was completely held up on the front of the 2nd Division and this time it had been our luck to be in support and we were only called on for the vastly depressing task of burying some of the nine hundred casualties of the attacking battalions of our Brigade.

It had been a strenuous and miserable time, but there was a horrid cheerfulness about the survivors who came intact from a battle. After a night spent in the squalid cottages of Annequin Fosse, where we had recovered our kits, received our mails, washed and slept off the effects of the previous week, we marched our singing platoons down the La Bassée road, past the Casualty Clearing Stations, the signs for 'Walking Wounded' and 'Aid Posts,' and now-silent gun positions and ammunition parks, through Beuvry and were at last billeted in an unfinished church in the rue d'Aire. The officers had scattered billets in a less interesting part of the town but almost the entire mess dined that night in the *Paon d'Or* in great good cheer, forgetful of the previous week, of the enormous grave behind Cambrin Church, and the unburied dead lying thick between the lines from the Canal to Hulluch.

It was in these weeks that I got to know Béthune and to love it. Mac announced that for the period of the 'rest' the Company Mess would be dissolved, so Graham, Charlie and I made a small mess of our own at which Kenneth was a frequent visitor. Yet we did a very odd thing in this small establishment of ours : we rented the sitting-room in Charlie's billet and arranged with Madame there to let one of our batmen cook in her kitchen. Many strange things happened in the War, but I cannot imagine anything more grotesque than that in a Frenchwoman's house special arrangements should be made, and paid for, whereby a British batman should perform his weird rites in her presence. The ways of youth are indeed strange.

In winter the narrow streets became greasy with mud, the Grand'Place was often bleak and rain-swept, and the industrial part of the town seemed in the ascendant, yet compared to the country outside the solid comforts of its houses and restaurants made up for the æsthetic loss of beauty. Spells of duty in the trenches would keep us away for weeks together, and we might be billeted in the surrounding villages, Beuvry, Le Quesnoy, or Le Préal, or Vendin, Oblinghem, or once in deep snow, in scattered farms about les Harisoirs, near Mont Bernenchon. These were miserable substitutes for Béthune, and rides in there in the afternoons or evenings were the only compensations.

The trenches were vile with mud and quite unnecessary flooding, there were outbreaks of 'trench foot' and frequent foot inspections and rubbings with oil. Kit inspections also became even more a time of trial than formerly. Some of us had the knack of keeping our platoons reasonably up to standard, or had the luck to be undetected in shortages: Charlie had neither. I remember one miserable night of rain and sleet when we had come to some sordid billets at Le Quesnoy after a particularly filthy time in the line, and kit inspections were at their height. Charlie had fared worse than ever: most of his platoon, Mac discovered, had eaten their emergency rations, shot off their ammunition, dropped their field dressings, thrown away their spare shirts, socks, holdalls and housewives. It was getting dark on the evening of this lamentable first day out of the line, and Mac had gone off to Battalion Headquarters: we were sitting about the mess doing various things, writing letters and what not, Charlie on the floor in a corner, in deepest gloom, smoking endless cigarettes and getting his beloved gramophone to console him for the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. The door swung open and Mac came in out of the rain. 'I'm sorry, you fellows,' he said, 'but we're to go back to the trenches to-night!' From the corner came a voice of deep thankfulness, 'Thank God!'

But spring and summer which brought back the loveliness to our town brought disintegration to our comradeship. The poplars and limes burst into bud, the chestnut alleys into glorious bloom, lilacs and laburnum showed among the houses beside the old ramparts, wistaria lent infinite grace to the houses beside the Church, and outside the town the woods about Hesdigneul and even Le Pr  ol were renewed with the beauty of young leaves: in this rebirth the old town responded to the stir of the year. Yet it was not the same, the months had wrought a change: the trenches had become progressively more deadly, they ceased to be the stimulating adventure of the previous year: friends in the Battalion were killed, the Company Mess was changed. Kenneth was invalided home, Graham and Charlie went to the Flying Corps: 'No more ruddy men to look after!' Charlie had yelled joyously as the train took him from B  thune Station.

So we who were left pursued a diminished companionship in the places where it had all been so spontaneous and happy in the dog days of last summer. Nor was the town quite the same: more troops (of less distinction, we considered) had introduced new conditions: an Officers' Club and the Expeditionary Force Canteen

had advantages, but they were marks that we were no longer so closely identified with the town and its people in our daily wants. And as in the mess, so among the rank and file, there were changes : old comrades whom we had got to know so well were largely replaced by new faces, who were strange to the customs and common interests gained in so many and strange places. So our farewell to Béthune, when it came at last after all the strenuous months, was a less sharp cleavage than it would have been at the beginning of the year.

Mac and I, who now only were left of the happy family who had come to Béthune almost a year before, sat in the empty mess and watched the flies buzzing about the ceiling, while the hot sunshine poured down relentlessly on the street outside. The orders had been issued, all kits were packed, the subalterns were with their platoons, and in half an hour's time we would be gone. I do not think we said anything, but we knew that a chapter in our lives was ended.

I thought when I went back to Béthune a few years ago, that I would want to weep : for Mac who lies in High Wood, for Kenneth on Henin Hill, for Charlie at Valenciennes, for Graham in a cemetery at home, and for all the memories of them there were for me in the streets of that town : but our Béthune was not there. A rebuilt belfry, innocent of satellite houses and shops, dominated a rebuilt Grand'Place, with a garish restaurant with modern decorations on the north side : the *Globe* was on the other side, but I dared not enter. The old roofs were gone, and St. Waast was gone : a horrible new church stood on its site, with a large tower, revolting in its commonplace regularity. Wide new streets with great shop windows were driven through the old crowded sites and homely cobbled ways. I do not complain, but I did not stay. Béthune as I knew it (if it ever did exist) was gone and I must be gone too : its memories were too sweet to be broken.

Were its amenities so good : its charms so attractive ? It had its drab parts and the contrast it gave to the life of these days must have added much to its simple charms, just as 'China-town' at the *Hippodrome* got all the glamour of six days' leave added to it. Yet though to more mature and comfortable eyes the yesterdays in Béthune may seem coloured with a rosy haze of memory, it had the virtues of quiet order in surrounding turmoil, and it was mellow with the traces and heritage of a past, which even the uproar of that dreadful present did not obliterate nor overlook. And it was the place where we went in the freshness and loyalty of our youth and comradeship, and there we left much of it, and of our love.

## A TURKESTAN EXCURSION.

BY G. V. B. GILLAN.

'SUMMER's a pleasant time,' so sang the poet ; but Jorrocks held other views, and these are shared, for other reasons, by all who are condemned to live in Asia's plains.

There are, of course, worse plains in which to serve a sentence than those of Turkestan, where the summer is comparatively short and where the temperature seldom exceeds 100 degrees ; but even 'the naughty nineties' become uncomfortable when unrelieved by the modern amenities of ice made-to-order and of electric fans, and cause the sufferer to lift up his eyes unto the hills before June is far spent.

So, it was with feelings of expectant relief that my wife and I quitted our heated headquarters in Kashgar on June 15 and set our faces towards the great rampart of snow mountains which bounds the Pamirs on their Chinese side. The actual relief still hovered beyond our grasp, for in a land ignorant of rail or motor all travel is slow and arduous, while we knew well that, for reasons which will appear shortly, the second day's stage on this journey would prove no light affliction.

On the first day we covered over thirty miles through cultivated and well-watered country ; on this stage wheels could be used, and we jolted along accordingly in an ancient and rickety Russian troika which was locally considered to represent the last word in luxury and comfort. Neither the vehicle nor the road left much hopes of comfort ; but the comparative swiftness of this modernised means of transport (about eight miles per hour) allowed us to give a day's start to our baggage and riding horses, and to overtake them at the end of the 'wheel' road, a large oasis pleasantly named OPAL.

We were now on the outer fringe of the *sai*, a usefully brief Turki word which describes all the dry gravel fringes sloping from the mountain bases down to the plains, and to reach the Ayak Art Valley, up which our route finally lay, we had to accomplish a march of forty miles diagonally across this *sai*, waterless except for some springs at the sixth mile. It will readily be believed that this is a formidable undertaking, especially in summer, and that these forty miles have called forth heartfelt maledictions from

the very few European travellers who have had the misfortune to traverse them; the journey is, indeed, no jest even for the local Turkis who sometimes travel it from Opal in order to trade with the Kirghiz of the Ayak Art. What does seem incredible is that the same Turkis should continue to do this penance, and cause others to do it, when there is another route, little if any longer, which would afford the traveller water in plenty throughout the march.

This latter is a track which runs along the *sai's* upper edge to link up a succession of Kirghiz settlements, each situated at the mouth of a deep valley and each dependent upon a mountain torrent whose snow-fed waters reach, though they cannot penetrate, the dry, gravel slopes.

Now, the Kirghiz are mountaineers and the Turkis are plainsmen, but there is no particular animosity between the two, nor—still more unusual circumstance—are these mountaineers at all pugnacious. It cannot be, then, that the Turki, chicken-hearted though he is, avoids the better route from fear: it is merely his horrible custom to proceed by the other, and the customs of the Turki are as elastic as the Laws of the Medes and Persians.

The fact that a custom is of a proved stupidity does not in any way weaken it.

No horse may be allowed, under any circumstances, to drink whilst on a journey or for several hours after completing a day's journey. It is useless to upbraid the Turki or to argue with him on the subject.

'Why do you do this cruel thing? You yourself don't go thirsty.'

'It is the custom.'

'What is the reason for such a custom?'

'If the horse drinks it goes lame at once: the water runs down through its legs, collects round its fetlocks and makes it lame.'

'How can water run down through its legs? Do you feel it running down through yours?'

'I don't know: it is the custom.'

'Our horses are never allowed to be thirsty. Do they go lame?'

'No: they have become accustomed to your custom.'

'When I borrowed your horse I insisted on letting him drink. Did he go lame?'

'No.'

'Do your horses sometimes die of thirst?'

'Yes.'



'Then why not stop being a damned fool and let them drink?'

'It is a very strict custom.'

On the return journey we were put upon the right road by our Kirghiz hosts, in whose mountains stupidity is liable to entail Death; but to reach the promised land we had first to suffer at the hands of Turki 'guides.' They had the sense, or instinct, to turn back from the edge of the hills: but they returned by their customary route.

We moved off, accordingly, on the morning of June 16 with our cavalcade of two servants, two orderlies, two riding horses, a dozen pack-ponies, and last, but not least, two dogs, a faithful and much-travelled spaniel and a long-legged American 'varmint hound.' We stopped by the springs at mile six, a pleasant hollow with grass and a few shady trees which contrasted vividly with the dull aridity all round, and remained there in comparative coolness and comfort until four o'clock in the afternoon when, after seeing that all water-bottles had been filled, we literally went 'over the top' to face the thirty-four dry, desert miles that lay between us and the mouth of the Ayak Art valley. Marching steadily until dusk we hoped to accomplish a good twelve miles that evening; actually there were the usual delays in getting the Oriental pony-man to start off, and when darkness fell, barely eight miles had been accomplished.

We bivouacked in the desert and, with our baggage placed ready for immediate loading, snatched a few hours' sleep on the least stony piece of ground available, half-fearing and half-hoping that we would be rained upon before morning. A thunderstorm in the mountains did not, however, reach the *sai*, and at 3 a.m. we loaded up and resumed our dry and stony way. Alternately marching on foot and riding at a walk (all that the ground permitted) we had covered about fifteen miles before our enemy the sun topped the hill, while some light clouds continued for another hour to give grateful protection from his rays. There was little to see in the gravel desert and the tedium of the march was only broken by a solitary gazelle, naturally within easy shot as it was a doe, a herd of gazelle, naturally unstalkable as it contained several bucks, and a party of charcoal burners, whose individual estimates of the remaining distance to the Ayak Art stream varied from 'quite near' to 'a very long way.' By about nine o'clock the clouds had deserted us and the sun was hitting out with full vigour from above, while the stones and gravel were beginning to hit out from below. By this time there were only some six miles left to do—quite suffi-

cient under the circumstances, for the journey had already begun to tell—but a satisfactory accomplishment looking back on the long, dry, gravelly miles that we had already traversed. Three very hot miles brought us to a line of desert poplars where a pool of water might sometimes be found after rain—but not on this occasion—and another mile led to a small stony pass, the divide between the repellent valley of drought and that of the Ayak Art Su. The pass was but a few hundred feet in height and as we crossed the crest the stream appeared, barely a mile distant, brown and turgid with snow broth, but undeniably water!

Animals and humans alike hurried forward and did not take long to reach the bank; the dogs rushed straight into the middle of the stream and were joined there immediately by the Turki pony-men, who alone had drunk up all the contents of their water-bottles as soon as the sun grew hot. Our ponies did not seem to have suffered at all from thirst and took only a very mild interest in this sudden, limitless supply of water: they had their reward in the rich grazing on the banks and an extra ration of maize (the invariable Turkestan horse feed).

Camp was soon pitched on a plot of level turf and we were all 'busy resting' and registering gratitude at our escape from the drought, when our thanks were somewhat excessively answered by a heavy thunderstorm. It would have been most welcome some hours earlier, and may have been very welcome in any case to some unfortunates still traversing the *sai*, but I fear the latter thought did not strike anyone particularly at this juncture; we were merely left cursing the vagaries of Nature, who burnt us when we required moisture and drenched us when we wished to be dry.

On the 18th and 19th we travelled easily up the banks of the Ayak Art Su, crossing the stream from time to time, and found good camping sites near Kirghiz settlements with all that man can desire—a land flowing with milk and firewood. A thunderstorm every evening seemed to be the normal occurrence, and after the first march nearly swept our newly pitched camp off its ledge altogether; fortunately there was no such frightfulness in the daytime, as the river rapidly came down in spate after each downpour and remained unfordable for some hours.

Near the top of the glen there is a mass of *débris*, where a considerable portion of the mountain-side was hurled into the valley bottom by an earthquake some fifteen or twenty years ago, and here two small lakes have been formed. Above the lakes, at about

11,000 feet, are the chief summer camps of the Ayak Art Kirghiz, where they resort with their flocks and herds for the grazing, leaving only two or three men on each permanent settlement below to look after the growing crops. Some quite large settlements are, in fact, deserted altogether except for an occasional visit from a small party deputed from the community above. Under these circumstances, it does not take long to discover that the Kirghiz is a fifth-rate agriculturist and usually has to supplement his grain supplies by purchase, against livestock, from the plains.

On June 20 we crossed the Ayak Art Dewan, an easy pass of 12,000 feet, and after coming down to the gorge of the upper Kashgar River proceeded up to the head of a side valley called Kok Yar (the Blue Ravine). Here we pitched our camp on the bank of the Kok Yar stream amongst clumps of rhubarb and edelweiss, both of which appear in profusion in these glens above 12,000 feet; the main ridge of the Kashgar Tagh was only four miles beyond us, a dazzling chain of snow mountain and glacier, barely 20,000 feet at its topmost summit, but uncrossed and probably uncrossable by human beings throughout its sixty-mile run from the gorge of the Kizil Su in the north to the one rift in the south, suitably termed the Olugart (Dead Horse) Pass, which Sven Hedin describes as the most difficult pass he ever attempted.

The Kok Yar itself and its side jilgas are only occupied by Kirghiz summer camps in occasional years, when grazing has proved unusually poor nearer at hand; otherwise they know only the wandering hunter, seeking for fox and marmot with his traps, or for ibex meat with his ancient muzzle-loader, a curious weapon whose three-pronged rest after the fashion of a camera tripod gives the user the appearance of an arquebusier in a medieval picture. It seems scarcely credible that any human being should undergo fatigue and privation for the sake of so tough and wiry an addition to his diet; but then it must seem even less credible to the Kirghiz that any should be so foolish as to undergo similar toil for the mere reward of ibex horns—useful only to form the trumpets wherewith the Turkoman miller announced to all adjoining farms that he is about to start work and then, too, much more easily obtained from the skeletons found every spring in the valley bottoms, when the snow and the wolves have done their work.

Be that as it may, we had travelled here to stalk ibex and, with the usual enthusiasm of those so addicted, insisted on starting operations at once. Our first dawn in the Kok Yar found us already

a couple of thousand feet above the small camp which we had left, regretfully enough, at the grim hour of half-past three in the morning, a singularly cold and cheerless moment, even in midsummer, at anything over 12,000 feet. However, any little discontents of this kind were speedily forgotten in the glories of the sunrise over the mountains opposite, the whistle of the great snow cocks and the chances of spying ibex in the corrie before us.

We were now half-way up a small jilga known as the Kok Bulak (blue springs) which ran from an 18,000-foot ridge into the main valley of the Kok Yar. The lowest mile or so of this jilga was sheer rock precipice, on both sides; its upper part opened into a hollow with rich grass slopes ending, again, in difficult but practicable rock ridges. Having avoided its most inhospitable entrance we were coming in from the side, climbing over the right bank ridge, and from this ridge there was no difficulty in spying the whole corrie. 'Tagh Tekke' (ibex) exclaimed the shikari, and, behold, eight ibex could be picked out, including five bucks: one buck was grazing barely 200 yards away, but he was a little fellow and could be left alone; another, not much larger, was just across the stream 600 yards off: three fully sizeable were under the rocks at the extreme top whence they enjoyed an uninterrupted view across the whole ground.

There was really nothing to be done here and so we proceeded to climb the opposite ridge in order to spy the ground beyond, the nearer ibex flying at once, the further beasts retiring over the crest with becoming dignity. It was a hard climb up, and breath is short at these altitudes, but rather less than an hour found us on the ridge, barometer height just under 16,000 feet, looking over into the Keinar, a jilga parallel to the Kok Bulak and ending, like it, in a gorge of impracticable rock precipices.

There were no signs of ibex at the top, but from a spur half-way down we made out a large herd lying down just above the mouth of the gorge. They were quite unapproachable, but we were between them and the best grazing, and so it seemed not unlikely that, if we waited with sufficient patience, they would eventually come up to us—wind permitting. Meanwhile, it was worth the morning's climb to lie on the eaves of the world and watch this splendid collection of animals, big dark-coloured bucks and big whitish bucks, resting unperturbed, younger fellows that occasionally got up to hold a sparring match, restless kids, inquisitive and very observant nannies. Early in the afternoon the entire herd bestirred itself

and began to come slowly up the jilga, according to plan. The final event, alone, failed to follow the plan: the leaders came up, unconscious of danger, and were followed by half a dozen good bucks; the shots looked easy enough at animals walking past in good light at little over a hundred yards, and we each selected a target and, craning over our ridge, fired—a dismal and disheartening fiasco, for both bullets flew over the shoulders of their destined victims and flicked up the dust just beyond. In the intensity of the moment it is difficult to remember the established fact that to shoot with a full sight at an object directly below can lead to one result only. The result had duly followed and we were left lamenting and far from home, ready to prove another established fact, that downhill progress after failure is more tiring than uphill work when hopes run high.

The next morning I determined to try the jilgas running into the right, or east, bank of the Kok Yar valley. Forging the icy torrent of the Kok Yar main stream an hour before dawn I envied my wife, wisely still sleeping after the exertions of the previous day, and marvelled at the folly which led one to climb high mountains, in breathless discomfort, at ungodly hours, in the mere hope of shooting a tough and most unpalatable goat. But these feelings are short-lived at the worst and dawn found me, cold but happy, a few hundred feet below the high ridge overlooking the Kara Bel jilga—the chief right bank tributary of the Kok Yar. Another half-hour brought me to a knoll on the ridge, and here I got busy with field glass and telescope whilst Abdullah, the Kirghiz shikari, more effectively used his eyes.

There was nothing on the grass slopes below, but about half a mile farther up the ridge, on a small rocky spur, was a herd of ibex and there were at least three good bucks with the herd. We slipped back quietly behind the ridge and, going less warily than some bad shale slopes warranted, returned to the crest at a snow patch which had seemed from the distance to be the best point for the shot. Crawling forward on the hard crusted snow to a single boulder on the skyline, I was rewarded by the sight of our herd, standing up but unperturbed, 200 yards away, down the spur. One buck was obviously better than any of the others, so, waiting only till he turned sideways and stood clear of his companions, I aimed as low as I dared on his shoulder and pulled the trigger. The bullet struck him, higher than I aimed, and he went sliding down a hundred yards of steep shale to lie dead at the bottom.

With crusted snow at the top and treacherous shale lower down it took us some minutes to reach him, and Abdullah, whose first delight had obviously been obscured by some deep thoughts, asked me anxiously whether I had not heard him say 'Bismillah' just after the shot; he had said so many things that I was quite prepared to swear that 'Bismillah' was one of them and a load was at once lifted from his mind. 'Very well,' he said, 'that's just as good as having halled it properly.'

By this time we had reached our prize, an old beast with 47-inch horns, nothing particular in the Thian Shan but a good head for the Pamirs and Kashgar Mountains where they do not run large. Something from a flask mixed most kindly with the water of the small burn beside which the ibex lay, and after gralloching him we returned to camp in triumph.

On the next day I determined to retrieve our original failure in the Keinar and, accompanied by Abdullah, once more faced the cold and dismal dawn on that stark mountain-side. The first glen—Kok Bulak—showed one buck only, who being young and foolish offered an easy shot from the path we followed. I let him scamper into safety, and then struggled up the steep ridge beyond which lay the Keinar.

Pausing to spy from the top, there were no beasts in sight, but a perfect parade of mountain ranges that, for the moment, drove out all thoughts of even the greatest ibex.

Northwards below our feet gleamed the Markan Su, the chief source of the Kashgar River, and beyond its waters as far as the eye could see stretched range after range of the Thian Shian, the Celestial Mountains. To the south rose immediately above us the glittering snows of the Kashgar Tagh, east and west the ridges and jilgas running from that great mountain mass. It was a sight vouchsafed to few indeed except wandering Kirghiz like my friend Abdullah, who now looked around him without the slightest manifestation of interest therein.

But he was keen enough where the pursuit of ibex was concerned and had no mind to waste time in gazing over ridges where he could see nothing to stalk. I found myself 'moved on,' and instead of descending into the Keinar jilga of the first day's unhappy memory, groped along the knife-edge top of the main mountain ridge: we had not far to go, for after what seemed about half a mile of rock climbing—and was doubtless much less—we suddenly saw four beasts spread out, resting, round a rock pinnacle 300 yards ahead.







They were completely unsuspecting and the wind blew briskly from their direction ; there was a clump of rocks on the ridge 50 yards ahead of us, but only a smooth saddle beyond with barely enough cover to hide a stone marten. Obviously a 250-yard shot could be obtained without much difficulty, but nothing nearer. Some violent amateur mountaineering brought me safely to the point of vantage, and taking a very full sight (for some unknown reason I had come out with a heavy Mauser instead of the much flatter 375 Mannlicher) I fired at the bigger of the four. The buck dashed off the ridge and collapsed in a small nullah, got on to his feet and was finished by a second bullet. The first shot had struck him too low and probably would not have hit at all if I had not consciously allowed for a poor trajectory.

It was now to be my wife's turn to stalk, and the following dawn found us on the same Kara Bel ridge, where I had spied and shot my good beast two days before. We were now a party of four, the 'rifle,' Abdullah shikari, myself (as a very much 'second' shikari), and a Hunza youth brought to look after the two ponies which we took to ford the main stream and carry us as far up the hill as possible. The last-mentioned member of the party, an enthusiastic volunteer, was the best man on a hill I have ever met ; the longest climb up the steepest mountain with rifle, haversack, spare coats and anything else to be carried, brought him to the top scarcely heated and not in the slightest out of breath ; while rock precipices obviously meant no more to him than stony paths on the flat ground.

The ridge and its upper slopes were untenanted this morning, but there was a small herd lying down in a grassy hollow about half a mile below us, and one of the recumbent figures was a buck. We planned the stalk from our point of vantage and proceeded to put the plan into action at once. Slipping back behind the ridge we came down under its shelter to the steep face of the main Kok Yar valley, whence we had marked a water-course running in the direction of our herd. The watercourse gave a good line of approach, until it turned up to the right and we found ourselves still 300 yards from the buck, separated from him by a bare grass slope. He was still lying down, but some of his females were now up and grazing. There was nothing for it but to crawl, and crawl we did, slowly and laboriously, advancing when all the ibex seemed busy with their own affairs, imitating rocks as nearly as possible when any of them showed a tendency to look in our direction.

A small rock about 180 yards from the ibex seemed the best

objective, and to this we finally attained, still undetected. The 'rifle' now refound her breath and prepared to shoot, but the target appeared merely as a head and a pair of horns in the grass. I gave a low whistle and a doe looked up: another and the horns moved—a third and he stood up, to fall dead in his tracks. He turned out to be a biggish beast with thick heavy horns, much battered with fighting and frayed at the tips, but of disappointing length, being barely 37 inches.

On the following day my wife was equally successful with a very similar stalk, differing only in the fact that we had to penetrate higher up the Kara Bel jilga before spying a herd, and that we saw a Pamir fox which ran between us and the ibex actually during the stalk. These are valuable animals in the fur trade and must be pretty numerous in the mountains bordering Kashgaria, judging from the numbers trapped and brought in to the trading centres: this was, however, the only one we actually saw in our wanderings. We saw, too, the tracks of a number of wolves who had passed through the jilga; fortunately for our stalking they did not seem to have stopped there.

On the following morning we left the Kok Yar and retraced our steps to the Ayak Art valley. The Kok Yar had certainly proved a successful shooting ground and had left many memories of marvellous sunrises behind the Thian Shan, sunsets over the snows beside us, and long days in perfect weather on the mountainside; but we were beginning to suffer from 'that tired feeling' which physical exertion at a high altitude will always produce, a lack of appetite and an occasional sleeplessness, which both seem out of place when pursuing one of the finest of sports in such magnificent natural surroundings.

We felt better as soon as we had descended into the Ayak Art and, with the usual perversity of human beings, proceeded within forty-eight hours to take ourselves and our camp to just below snow-line height up the main tributary valley, called the Gul Dosun. It may be explained in passing that snow-line height in midsummer in the Central Asian mountains, where precipitation is always small, is no little height above sea-level: it must be about 16,000 feet.

We determined to visit this valley partly because it was unmapped, and therefore appealed insistently to the exploring instinct; partly because Abdullah's summer encampment was on the grazing grounds at its top, and partly because the said Abdullah swore to the presence therein of ibex larger than any in the Kok

Yar. This statement may have been caused chiefly by a desire to visit his temporary home, but it was nevertheless founded on fact.

The Gul Dosun is a valley some seven miles in length. The two streams which water it rise from a group of glaciers lying under an unnamed 19,000-foot peak of the Kashgar Tagh; after traversing the high grass lands which form the Kirghiz summer grazings they enter a belt of stunted pines, then some pines recognisable as trees, after which the valley opens out into cultivation with a few scattered farms, to close again before reaching the Ayak Art. The two streams meet in a birchwood, a fact which seems worthy of mention in a country where these trees are so rare. We saw many birches when coming up to the Pamire from the Indian side, but practically none on the Turkestan side, except in this valley, though the Kirghiz said that they were common enough in Russian Turkestan.

After inspecting Abdullah's farm, which gave better hopes of a fair barley crop than most of those we saw along the Kashgar Tagh, and was further distinguished by the possession of a small wheatfield and a large walnut-tree, we moved steadily upwards until we reached his *akoi* above the pine belt. An *akoi* (*ak* white, *oi* a house) also known as a *yurt* or *kirgah* is the round, beehive form of tent made of felts bound over a wicker frame which all Central Asia nomads use, whether Kirghiz, Kazak, or Mongol. They are a most useful and, on the whole, comfortable form of dwelling, easily packed and transported, snowproof, practically waterproof, and to a large extent windproof. To travellers like ourselves they have the further very great advantage over other local habitations of being easily moved to a clean piece of ground. Skill in assembling an *akoi* on its wicker frame seems to be largely confined to the women who are almost always called in to assist at the critical juncture.

Except for Abdullah himself, none of the Gul Dosun Kirghiz had ever seen a European. An enquiry on this point from the oldest inhabitant led to the reply, which he considered entirely à propos, that about forty years ago the Chinese Amban of Kashgar had reached the valley, but that otherwise he knew of no such visitors! It cannot be said that these people were any the worse for their ignorance of the outside world: they were kind and friendly to meet and, apparently, well contented with their lot, a sufficiency of this world's goods, wherein money plays little or no part, practically no interference from the Chinese Government, to whom such nomads do not represent an appreciable source of revenue, and safety from the only other Government known to

them, the Soviet, a safety ensured by the impassable barrier of the Kashgar Tagh. 'Bakkshish' and all that it connotes has not yet penetrated to the Gul Dosun: long may it be before it does so.

It was now Abdullah's task to show me the enormous ibex of which he had chattered, and I sallied forth with him accordingly, at the usual grisly hour, glad enough to have one more day on ibex ground but with no expectation of seeing anything out of the ordinary. We rode for a couple of hours along a precipitous goat track, which he called a road, and when I had become completely unnerved and insisted on taking to my feet, pegged out our ponies in a hollow to graze.

To the Kirghiz hunter no mountain-side ever seems unrideable; he sticks to his pony to the bitter end, and this, I think, accounts for the fact that he is usually a worse stalker even than the European amateur; from sheer laziness the Kirghiz will constantly show himself, a large mounted figure on the skyline, before he has attempted to make good likely ground in front of him, and such forms of carelessness are particularly disastrous in the pursuit of wild goats and wild sheep, animals which may lack the stag's power of hearing but leave him far behind in their keenness of eyesight. It is only fair to say that Abdullah was less careless in this respect than his confrères and, when beasts had actually been spied, he dropped all casual methods and planned his stalk thoroughly and with proper regard to ground and wind.

We climbed on to a ridge after abandoning the ponies, and I was glad that I had insisted on leaving them: for beyond the ridge was a wide, open slope running up gradually to the final steep edge of the mountain summit, and at the far end of this slope were some twenty ibex. Obviously, they were in a most awkward position to approach and Abdullah suggested an immediate retirement, to leave them undisturbed and to return the next morning, preferably at an even earlier hour, in the hopes of finding them on the best patch of grazing, which was very much nearer to our ridge. This counsel fell on deaf ears. It was no part of my plan to stay longer in the Gul Dosun, I could see nothing in the herd out of the ordinary, and I determined, therefore, to try the stalk at once, caring little, to tell the truth, whether it succeeded or not. The wind, at least, was in our favour and, by crawling up a small watercourse and using the cover of two little hillocks, we succeeded in getting within long, but possible, range of the nearest. There were at least three bucks whose horns looked good for 45 inches and, as I could



get into a comfortable position and take my time, I tried a shot at what seemed the best of them.

I was pretty sure that I had missed, but within a couple of seconds my mind had ceased to occupy itself with the question ; for, from behind a big rock where he had been lying, leapt the authentic Super Ibex, the undoubted Monarch of these glens, who headed the rest in flight across the top of the slope and showed up superbly against the common herd as he fled. Never had I seen such a curve or such a length of horn, dwarfing the three big bucks behind him ; never shall I see such horns again, unless perchance I reach some day the Thian Shan themselves. Fifty-five ? Allah is all-knowing. ' I told you,' said Abdullah, ' this jilga has fewer ibex than the Kok Yar but bigger ; that one is the biggest of all.'

The herd raced along level in single file for two or three hundred yards and then turned upwards to cross a spur. The third in the line failed to turn with the rest, began to run downhill, and then suddenly collapsed. The original shot, almost forgotten in the spectacle which it had roused, had not been a miss after all, but had struck its victim behind the shoulder : long shots are flukes and, therefore, quite unwarranted, when one considers the chances, not of missing, but of wounding only, and I trust that I shall not offend again. A 44-inch head, but how very ordinary compared to the might have been !

I saw the wonderful head no more, for its owner would not return for some days to the little marg where he had been so rudely disturbed ; and the time had come to leave our mountain fastnesses and to say farewell to the unspoiled Kirghiz of the Gul Dosun. In all probability the Monarch will continue to lead his herd until Avalanche, Wolves, or a Winter Blizzard bring him to an end : he has cunning and experience enough to elude the local gas pipe ; moreover, he must be incredibly tough.

The faithful Abdullah had promised to accompany us and show us the better way home to the plains. Instead of descending the Ayak Art to its mouth, he left the valley twelve miles above that point and crossed its right bank spur by a little used but perfectly practicable track to a Kirghiz settlement called Targhalik, whence two very short and easy marches past a number of streams and patches of cultivation brought us within sight of the Opal oasis. There was no necessity even for a little dog to become tired, thirsty or footsore, though no doubt the Turkis of the plains still prefer to become all three.

*Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat.*

# 'IFS' AND 'BUTS.'

BY THE HON. A. J. MCGREGOR.

*If* is a whimsical, speculative and playful sprite, often, like Rosa Dartle, asking questions, occasionally disposed to ruminate on the might-have-beens of life and circumstance—sometimes even beckoning us into the chamber of historic imagination. 'But' is more pedestrian—sombre of aspect, speaking often in hoarse accents, occasionally fateful—as like as not, ushering in disappointment, depression, defeatism. She can be the prelude to despair, the herald of catastrophe. A life-story may, of course, come to be expressed in terms of both *If* and *But*, suggesting or implying at once might-have-been and woe-is-me; for the Fates can weave a tangled web—not always regardful of logic or moved by mitigating circumstances; nor, on the other hand, does man always work skilfully or wisely according to his life-schedule—a train may have been missed, a sign-post mis-read, a will o' the wisp mistaken for a light upon the path.

For warning and instruction we have the record of the gifted and resolute Medea. She stands out as enterprising and resourceful among women—curious as Eve, courageous as an Amazon, calculating as Queen Elizabeth. Behind it all there was a scientific bent; for her sowing of dragons' teeth surely constituted a new and startling departure in agriculture, even though we might hesitate to characterise it as an instance of progressive farming. So far, so good; but unfortunately *But* enters into the story. Scientific ardour outran discretion, the consciousness of power perhaps beginning to intoxicate; her ethical sense must have grown dull. The boiling of a goat in a magic cauldron, thereafter restoring it to life and health, however interesting to the biologist, was a dangerous experiment; and the country-side may well have become suspicious. Still more questionable was her conduct, more lamentable her application of science, when her husband meditated the taking unto himself of another wife: for, misconceiving and misapplying what was afterwards to be the Scots doctrine *nemo me impune lacessit* she sends the bride-elect 'a poisoned robe and diadem,' which effectually put a stop to the wooing. (In this matter Medea antici-

pated, to some extent, the deadly efficiency of a Livia—if 'I, Claudius' correctly portrays the character and conduct of that imperial and imperious dame.)

And yet, in all this, there may be a call for the higher criticism ! Had Medea been guilty with intent, not merely negligent in act, why were divine honours accorded to her—and why was she allowed to marry Achilles in Elysium ? Did admiration for her bold experiments evoke a reluctant admiration from the august Olympians (themselves none too fastidious or too tolerant, if report speaks true), or did they perchance deem discretion the better part of valour if Medea was to be a fellow-resident in their celestial domain ; or did Zeus consider that Achilles would be none the worse for having a strong-minded consort ? Or (one can only guess here) did he conceivably divine how, in ages to come, Man, now sufficiently advanced in enlightenment, knowledge and state-craft, would himself employ science to poison man in war, without penalty or reproach ? We cannot tell ; but taking things as they were yesterday, we need not censure Medea overmuch.

A more cheerful *If* is suggested by the career of Atalanta—affording us a merry tale of what happened long ago 'in Tempe or the dales of Arcady' : the exact locality matters not ; Strabo and the atlas were still unknown. The point of substance is that Atalanta's charms, or prowess in 'hiking,' brought suitors ; and suitors entail a choice. Her quick mind (or a parent's anxious thought ?) sees a solution. Not a man's status or endowments, but foot and stride, should determine her destiny. There would be a race : if a suitor won, 'he was to be rewarded with her hand, if not, he was to be put to death by her.' (He must in fact 'put it to the touch, to win or lose it all.') Behold the world's first 'Marathon' or recorded Athletic Sports—Atalanta herself perhaps, a hot favourite, for 'she was the most swift-footed among all mortals.' *If* she had won the race, she had probably been the first to achieve a world 'record'—the first in that notable class which includes Daedalus and Milo, Sir Malcolm Campbell and Don Bradman. Alas, that we have to declare it ! She failed ignominiously. One Hippomenes hit on that which the learned author of *Scintillae Juris* rashly affirmed none had yet discovered—an effective *argumentum ad feminam*. We know how a trick of three gold apples cunningly dropped *en route* put the challenger off her stride, and the crafty suitor won—the referee apparently not disqualifying him ; and so Atalanta became one of the might-have-beens of history.

The possible *Ifs* are numerous as the uncertain incidents of time and circumstance, kaleidoscopic as the fluctuations of man's mood. We can but touch the fringe of a great subject. The historian, philosopher or sociologist has already noticed the leading (or misleading) case of Cleopatra's nose : what if it had been longer ! But this is a somewhat special case, involving a matter of facial aesthetics : turn we to graver themes. What if Charles Martel had not stayed the Saracen advance at Tours (Poitiers) in 732 ? Then, possibly, neither Charles of the Franks nor Anglo-Saxon Alfred would have become ' the Great,' and the song of Roland would have remained unsung. What if the Turk had not taken Constantinople in 1453 ? The Renaissance might have been postponed or proceeded on different lines, and Greek not been so long compulsory at Oxford (and why not ?). What if Bonnie Prince Charlie had won the battle of Culloden—and thereafter added civic wisdom to adventurous ardour ? There might have been no George III with the obstinate, awkward courage of his family and his royal convictions, no talented Lord North with his attractiveness, his easy-going ways, his irresolution—and, possibly, the American Colonies had still belonged to Great Britain (or Great Britain to them !)—and, probably, Catholic Emancipation had come earlier and William O'Brien's ' Union of Hearts ' been more of healthy fact and less of pathetic fancy. What if the practice of building tariff walls higher than ever Balbus built, should come to be seriously reconsidered, and the dumping of superfluous foodstuffs be deemed a stupid and ill-timed joke ? What if people could discuss ' race ' as a matter of anthropological, linguistic and historical interest without losing their temper, their heads, or their friends ? What if it be desirable that freedom should remain a vital fact and not merely furnish a text for eloquent platitudes ? Such are questions with which the spritely *If* can play at will—while the Mandarins look on, watching—possibly suspecting the presence of some *But* round the corner.

And now it is time to say something of that cold-blooded sprite, already perhaps irritated at having been ignored so long : she cares not (perhaps hardly realises) that her message is seldom welcome, herself somewhat too ready and willing to be the harbinger of evil or depressing tidings. To some extent we have already introduced her in the Medea chronicle ; but something more intimate and searching should be attempted. A line out of a recent novel happens to be neatly illustrative : " ' Sorry, but—oh, it's full of buts ! ' " he cried.' Enthusiasm is damped, and *If* at once flies away, rightly

surmising that if she stayed on there might be a clash of temperaments. And yet one feels that *But* does not always or necessarily act of malice aforethought ; it just happens that she has lowered the temperature : we seem to detect (not without sympathy) the presence of Mrs. Gummidge—at times, again, we can almost hear Cassandra, in good faith, broadcasting some unlucky or unhappy ending. Indeed, *But* plays her most pathetic part in a life-history where one can diagnose no specific flaw in character, no failure in conception or scheme of action : can merely sense a wayward stroke of Fate neutralising undoubted capacity, or opening the door to some disabling prank played by Puck in wanton mood. *But* can remind us, for instance, of Naaman the Syrian—captain of the host, but a leper ; and then again she may introduce us to the *homme manqué* in Charles Fox, so richly endowed (both by his father and by Nature), so fatally handicapped by himself ; or she hovers about the rich memory of Napoleon—almost genius incarnate, and yet never realising the full import of the saying *est modus in rebus*. (Indeed, if the story be true, *But* can add, to the saga of Napoleon and Julius Cæsar, a grim footnote about epilepsy.)

And so the hapless record of the foot of clay, or obliquity of vision, or the disharmony of facts, or the lack of a nice sense of proportion, meets us on all sides. The orator on the party platform makes out a powerful case for his side ; but warming to his theme his accents may (in Utopia) wax shrill—fireworks on occasion usurping the place of the modest but reflecting syllogism. The journalist, writing against time on some nice matter of current controversy, can splash superlatives too liberally where the positive would suffice and better meet the rights of the case ; the poet, impatient of old models and hackneyed topics, strains after novelty in *vers libre*, till the reader begins to feel like Austin Dobson's Child Musician, when the 'poor little head grew heavy, and the brain began to swim'—and one gets athirst for a draught of Keats or Coleridge, Wordsworth or even Gray. Possessions are great, but the State is greater—and to satisfy its just demands the dignified, hospitable and spacious country-house is converted into school or sanatorium : the country-side loses some of its charm and England some of her serene and gracious character. Education is in the air and opens her booths in every market-place ; but knowledge by itself is not always wise, however scientific her method or far-flung her syllabus of subjects. Man rightly is a matter for treatment by the medical faculty, and now becomes a subject of care to

the State ; but (ah me ! ) man seems in danger of becoming as standardised as the industry in which he wins his daily bread.

Yes, the *Buts* of life can make depressing reading—some might present a difficulty even to the keen and comprehending mind of Mr. Wodehouse's Jeeves ; and it may be necessary for man to-day to jettison old ideas and cherished predilections (and prejudices), even as he must perforce jettison a dismal quantum of his wealth in the public interest. On two matters he still retains his hold—his soul and the future. *But* is not, of necessity, the master of his soul : in the old jingle *If* is followed by the modest but not insignificant *and*—which is able to transport us sturdily and hopefully, buoyantly and triumphantly perhaps, into a new or unexplored world of possibilities and adventure. Nature has her own pharmacopœia ; nor should we lightly assume that her resources are exhausted, her drugs only efficacious in the cosmic sphere. Ever and anon, too, a Prospero emerges on the human scene with power to still the troubled waters. In short, the final word need not be *But*. *And* may yet appear as lord of the ascendant, with remedies for distress and a tonic for man's soul. It may be quite useful at times to reverse our traditional way of putting things—something like this : Cæsar was an epileptic *and* he was a compelling personality ; times are hard, *and* Nature's divining-rod may presently indicate new water-springs. Democracy sometimes muddles things ; but, if the occasion require it, electors can revise text-book maxims, silence 'big noises,' discourage feverish land-slides to right or to left. *And* may finally broadcast, with regard to Man, Lotze's sage and stimulating observation that 'erring, doubting and improving, he learns to know his destiny and his powers.'

*Pretoria.*



## *TWO FISHERMEN.*

BY HENRY BAERLEIN.

It was a brilliant May morning in the year 1676 and a green Staffordshire valley looked as if it were a vessel to hold the sunlight. And as the merry, little winds danced through the trees the foliage was dancing too and was not sad because it had to stay there. Nothing could be sad on such a day.

All the more surprising was it when a man, middle-aged and decently attired, walked with a grim countenance along the undulating road. He gazed not to the right nor to the left, but plodded on and frowned.

A company of children raced across a meadow several hundred yards ahead of him. They were pursuing one another, laughing breathlessly and shouting exclamations. Yet they were not so preoccupied as not to see the gloomy man who was advancing towards them. As if they had suddenly received an order, they stood still upon the road or by the side of it.

The mournfulness of the approaching man infected them; but when he was near enough to speak, his queries brought their happy animation back at once.

'Is this the road,' he asked, 'to Beresford?'

'We live there!' cried some of them.

'The devil take it,' said the man a little inconsiderately. 'If I had known it was so far . . .'

'No, it is over there.' A boy was holding out his arm. 'We could go with you, if you like.'

The man removed his hat and wiped the sweat from off his brow. 'If I had known,' he said, 'that it was as far as this . . .'

The children could not think what else to say.

'Are there no hostelrys in this part of the country?' he enquired. 'It is the most savage district in all England. Miles and miles since I saw an inn. They ought to know that such a hilly road makes people thirsty.'

'If you will wait here, sir,' volunteered the eldest boy, 'I will fetch you some water from the river. My father says it is the finest river. My father has written about it—"Instructions how

to angle for a trout or grayling in a clear stream." That is the name——'

'Oh, I dare say,' said the man in a rather rough, impatient tone. 'Now I am going—no, don't come with me—I don't want you. I am obliged, but I don't want any of you. I will be able to find the house.'

'The gates . . .'

But the man was striding up the road and he was thinking sourly of the gates. Of course a gentleman like Mr. Charles Cotton, who had lived in such an extravagant manner, so that he owed a great deal of money, of course he must be in a house with splendid ornamental gates. Well, he would have to dispose of them if he could not satisfy his creditors in any other fashion. Ostentatious, decorated gates with fat, gilt angels in the iron-work—he knew the style. Away with all those—and the children—what right had a debtor to have such a flock of children? But the face of Thomas Robley took on an expression of more kindness—these children were attractive—he was sorry for them, that they should have such a parent.

And the gates of Beresford, when Thomas Robley reached them, did not modify his charitable frame of mind, for they were much less ostentatious than some others he had seen. And Mr. Cotton did not waste his substance on the upkeep of the park. There was an air about it of neglect. All over the broad drive were green and golden weeds. The visitor, as he strode on, smiled with approval.

Beresford was a picturesque, gabled structure. The elderly man-servant who appeared in answer to Mr. Robley's ring told him that his master was not at home, but that the mistress could be seen.

'I would sooner wait and talk to Mr. Cotton when he comes back,' said Robley.

'Very well, sir,' said the servant. He added that Mr. Cotton might not return for many hours.

Robley was considering what to do and once again the servant offered to conduct him to the lady of the house. She was, he said, the Dowager Countess of Ardglass whom his master had married, as his second wife, a year ago.

'I am sure, sir,' said the man, 'that her ladyship would be pleased to see you.'

'I would not like to trouble her,' said Robley, 'and my business—it can wait. Will you get me a glass of water?'

A door opened and Lady Ardglass appeared. She was a tall, handsome woman.

Robley bowed to her and, before he realised it, he was obeying a gesture she made and was proceeding across the hall. He followed her into a large and airy room. Then he began to make excuses.

Lady Ardglass sighed. 'Are you,' she said, 'are you one of the—does my husband owe you money?'

'I am sent here,' said Mr. Robley. 'I am only in the service of others. You are surprised, I see, that I am dressed as a gentleman. That is merely to gain admittance, because my employers were afraid that . . .'

'Does my husband owe them a large amount?' she asked. 'It really is terrible.'

The poor lady seemed to be on the verge of tears and Mr. Robley, though he was used to situations of this kind, felt very ill at ease. It was a shame, he thought, that a person so gracious should have to suffer.

'When I married him——' said Lady Ardglass as she sank on to a sofa. 'There is something about you,' she said, 'that . . . I do not usually talk about my own affairs. Will you not sit down?'

Mr. Robley, as he took a seat opposite to her, shook his head gravely and murmured that he was very grieved. But what could he do? he asked.

'When I married him,' said the lady, 'I brought with me a jointure of £1,500 a year. And my family, knowing that Mr. Cotton had his little extravagances . . .'

'Some of them,' remarked Mr. Robley in a rueful tone, 'have been——'

'I assure you,' said his wife, 'that I have done my best to change him. Not that I would change him altogether, for he is a delightful man. I do not know how it comes that I am telling you all this. I have never done so before to any of the others. But you,' she smiled, 'you are——'

'Thank you very much,' said Mr. Robley. 'If I can do anything . . .'

'I suppose what you want to do,' she said, 'is to find my husband. That will not be easy. He will be inside his cavern, half-way up the hill-side. When it is a day not good for fishing he goes there—sometimes to write poetry—and when . . .' She looked more than a trifle embarrassed.

'When he has to avoid people like myself?'

Lady Ardglass was turning over the leaves of a book. 'I daresay you know this book,' she said. 'It is by the famous Mr. Walton. Oh, you must have heard of him—Mr. Izaak Walton, the fisherman. My husband had a letter from him to-day.'

'I never went out fishing in my life,' said Mr. Robley.

'He is such a fine old man,' she continued. 'He is eighty-three years old and yet he is going to pay us a visit, although he is more than a hundred miles from here, in London. That is what he wrote in the letter. My husband has taken it with him, I believe, to the cavern.'

Mr. Robley said he would be sorry to disturb him.

'Oh, heavens!' cried Lady Ardglass—she was very agitated and she laid a hand on Mr. Robley's arm—'you must not venture on a climb so dangerous. I beg it of you—and, indeed, it is out of regard for you and not because of my husband. But there was a man, some time ago, who climbed up there and missed his footing—he also had an errand such as you have—and he fell down from a height and was killed. My husband paid for the funeral and from that day he has given the man's widow a pension.'

'He need not have done that,' said Mr. Robley.

'Ah, you do not know him. If such a disaster were to happen again—'

'I will take every care of myself,' said Robley. 'And what shall I do until Mr. Cotton comes down?'

Lady Ardglass said it was beautiful by the river, the Dove. He could go to the fishing-hut and she would order a lunch to be prepared and a bottle of wine. A servant would carry it, of course, and show him the way.

'Your kindness,' he said,——'you make it hard for me, what I must do to your husband.'

'But if he cannot pay, if he has no money, what will you do then?' she asked. 'You would not take him away from me?'

Robley turned his head.

And Lady Ardglass, with a sinking heart, went out of the room. Presently she came back to say that the servant with the lunch was waiting.

Mr. Robley took leave of her. He found that the servant, who was a man from the stables, wanted to walk behind him and it was quite difficult for Mr. Robley to make the fellow march by his side, so that they could talk.

The man was well furnished with local knowledge. For example,

as they came down to the river-bank he pointed out some birds to Mr. Robley and informed him that they were terns. The black heads of them and the pale grey of their wings pleased Mr. Robley. He did not know why the man began to laugh.

'Well, you see, sir,' he explained, 'they call this variety the common tern and it is not so common at all. It may be you have never seen one before.'

'I don't think I have,' said Mr. Robley. 'And what is that little house?'

'We are going there,' said the man. 'I could tell you a good deal about these terns. You see that bit of shingle? Well, they breed all over it—I've known their nests so near together that you couldn't walk between them.'

'I wouldn't try to,' remarked Mr. Robley.

'And when the young ones are hatched the old birds don't care a bit. I mean they don't care about people. They don't care who sees them.'

Meanwhile Mr. Robley and his guide had reached the fishing-hut. It was—and is—a small, square building with a lofty roof. Above the entrance are inscribed the words 'Piscatoribus Sacrum' and the intertwined initials I.W. and C.C.

'I've heard people say,' quoth the man, 'that this is a beautiful bit of country.' He waved his hand towards the precipitous slopes, where from amid the trees fantastic rocks projected.

Mr. Robley was looking at a rock in the middle of the stream, an obelisk of grey stone.

'There are some folk,' said the man in a sly sort of whisper, 'who hold it strange about the two gentlemen, that they should be such friends. Mr. Walton is a saintly old gentleman and Mr. Cotton, he is not that. But there they are. And Mr. Cotton has told me himself that on the Day of Judgment he won't have to say anything else, only that he was a friend of Mr. Izaak Walton.'

The door of the fishing-hut was ajar. They went in and the servant placed the package of food and the bottle of wine on the marble table. He pointed out some pipes and a jar of tobacco on which, he said, Mr. Cotton was accustomed to breakfast. He was sure Mr. Cotton would not object if any visitor of his made use of them. As for himself, if the gentleman would excuse him, he would go back to his stables.

Mr. Robley had an excellent lunch, the main feature of which was powdered beef; this gave him a mighty thirst, so that he drank

rather recklessly of the sack which was in the bottle. When he had consumed about half of it he toasted the portraits of his absent host and of Mr. Walton and a serving-boy that were painted on a panel in the wainscoting. And when Mr. Robley had nearly finished the bottle he staggered out on to the grass-plot between the hut and the river. Very luxuriant was the grass that afternoon of May and Mr. Robley's head had scarcely touched it when he fell asleep.

He was still sleeping when, at about six o'clock, the sky clouded over and when Mr. Cotton descended to the fishing-hut. All that afternoon in the cave Mr. Cotton had occupied himself in making flies and in reading over again the letter from his venerable friend. Thus he was in the best of humours; he could not think ill of anyone and when he saw the prostrate figure in the grass he harboured no suspicion that this was a dun. Such was his glowing frame of mind that the superior garb of Mr. Robley influenced him very little. He did not indulge in speculation as to why the man was sleeping there or whence he might have come; and even after Mr. Cotton found that he had lunched inside the hut—the bottle which had fallen on the floor was broken—he did not much care. It would be excellent at eight o'clock for trout, but he would not wait until then.

His stalwart shoulders were the first things to be seen by Mr. Robley when that gentleman gained consciousness. There he stood, at the extreme limit of the land, casting his line with great energy. Then, as the wind veered round, he turned to cast it up the river. And after a few moments Mr. Robley noticed, by the fisherman's expression, that he had not cast in vain. Nor was it long before a magnificent fish—Mr. Robley had no idea what species it belonged to—was flying through the air. Some drops of water fell on the delighted Mr. Robley. He rose quickly to his feet.

'Good evening,' said the fisherman.

'You have had a fine catch,' said Mr. Robley.

'Why don't you join me? We can have as many trout this evening as—if you would like to fish from here, sir, I can move along. Where is your rod?'

'I wish I had one,' said Mr. Robley.

'That is soon mended,' exclaimed the cheerful fisherman. 'You came without it—I can lend you one, of course. And we shall have a splendid time. The trout are longing to be caught!'

He strode towards the fishing-hut and soon he reappeared with the tackle. 'When you were in the hut,' he said, 'did you observe





t  
I  
o  
g  
h

V

m  
at  
to

T  
be  
fo

N

sh  
st  
st  
h

co

di

m  
m  
ni

ca

the portrait of my father—he lets me call him father—of good Izaak Walton? I have the happiness to know in him the worthiest of men and the truest friend that any man has ever had. He is the greatest of us all, of all the anglers of the realm. Have you ever heard it doubted?’

Mr. Robley shook his head.

‘Ah, would that he were with us. Will you take this rod? Which is the kind of may-fly you prefer?’

‘Well . . . well . . .’ said Mr. Robley.

‘Yes, I know,’ said his companion. ‘There are several of great merit and to judge between them is not easy. But in my experience, at this time of day and at this season of the year, the stone-fly is to be preferred. If you will follow my advice . . .’

And so it came about that Mr. Robley fished the river Dove. This was the first occasion on which he had cast a line. With beginner’s luck he soon had landed a considerable fish. Then he forgot that there was such a thing as time.

And Mr. Cotton’s heart was full of love for his good comrade. Not a word escaped him, he was utterly absorbed in what he did.

At intervals Charles Cotton made an effort to suggest that they should cease, but the ecstatic look upon the face of his companion stifled what he would have said. Himself he would have willingly stayed there till daybreak, but his wife would be uneasy. So he hit upon a ruse.

‘My friend,’ he said to Robley, ‘I am rather cold. Will you come for a little walk?’

He thrust his arm through Robley’s and they went in the direction of the house.

‘To-morrow morning we will sit together,’ he remarked, ‘and make some of these flies. A fish one catches with a fly of one’s own make is twenty times more precious. But we have had a splendid night.’

‘How can I thank you?’ Robley said.

‘I have the yellow silk we want and a supply of hairs of a black cat’s whiskers for the top of the hook.’

‘That is it! That is it!’ murmured Robley.

Then Mr. Cotton raised his voice in song:

‘Come live with me and be my love  
And thou shalt all the pleasures prove,  
The mountain towering tops can show  
Inhabiting the vales below. . . .’

'Those are the first lines of a little thing I wrote,' he said.  
 "'An Invitation to Phillis'" I call it—you see it is a variation of  
 Marlowe's poem.'

They were approaching Beresford. And Lady Ardglass, standing  
 at a window, saw two fishermen come arm-in-arm across a  
 moonlit field, the rods athwart their shoulders and they both were  
 singing:

'Come live with me and be my love  
 And thou shalt all the pleasures prove.'

### *THE LITTLE GHOST.*

I NEVER saw her face  
 Or heard her name;  
 For me she had no special grace  
 Or personal claim.  
 I only heard her light and weary feet  
 Go up and down the stair  
 In the house upon the quay,  
 Sometimes before the sun was in the street,  
 And sometimes in the dusk,—but always unaware.  
 For I have heard her pass when the maids rattled cups or brought  
     the early tea—  
 Prosaic sounds of every day.  
 And sometimes when our guests were talking loud against the sea  
 That always moaned about the house upon the quay.  
 Through all the clatter and the chatter of our life  
 I heard her toiling up and down the stair,  
 And never knew if she were maid or wife—  
 If she were dark or fair—  
 What errands kept her up and down  
 In the house upon the quay  
 Where even the moaning of the sea could never drown  
 Her weariness, to me.

DOLF WYLLARDE.

## LITTLE GENERAL MONCK.

BY OLIVER WARNER.

*'I think the bringing up of his little army entirely out of Scotland up to London was the best stratagem that is extant in history.'*—HOBBS.

## I.

THE English, in common with a very few other nations, have a way of treating their heroes first with an affectionate familiarity, which is given expression in nicknames and even in nursery rhymes, and they then, all too often, forget them, until a fashion for a particular reign or century re-discovers much of their glory. General Monck, afterwards Duke of Albemarle, had his full measure of the first kind of fame: he has yet to have his due of the second. The French, oddly enough, have always been more appreciative. The great Guizot wrote an admirable brief life of the General, while the still greater Dumas made him the centre of one of the most amusing episodes in his *Vicomte de Bragelonne*, in which Monck is conveyed across the sea (clamped into a chest by D'Artagnan), to greet his unrestored and somewhat bewildered sovereign. Dumas puts into Monck's mouth many deliciously uncharacteristic remarks, among them being: "If I have not the wit God gave to Oliver Cromwell, I have that which he has sent to me."

The reason for neglect is not difficult to find. Although he may claim to have been the father of the modern British army—a claim which is often overlooked—he was also an Admiral, and he appears in many naval biographical collections, as if his fights with Tromp and de Ruyter were his only services to his country. He was one of Cromwell's most eminent lieutenants, yet he fought for Charles the First, and restored his son. Lastly, although accounted one of the first soldiers of his time, his Ducal motto included the words, 'Victor without Bloodshed'—which is so startling a claim for a general as to put him apart from his fellows.

Monck was an Elizabethan, not literally, but by tradition, and by the extraordinary circumstances of his life. He was born at Torrington in Devon, in the early years of James the First, when the personalities of the sea adventurers—Drake, Raleigh, Frobisher

and Hawkins—were living memories ; and he began his career in the colourful way which it was to continue. He thrashed the Under-Sheriff of the county, and was forced to leave England with haste and in silence.

The circumstances were as follows. Monck's father was a gentleman of ancient family but of impoverished estates, who lived in a fashion which he could not afford, and was in constant danger of being arrested for debt. It so happened that when the boy George was seventeen, Charles I, then in the year of his accession, was on a progress westward, to speed Buckingham's expedition against the Spaniards. Monck's father, like other gentlemen of the county, rode out to meet his sovereign, only to be arrested, almost within sight of the royal party, by the orders of this Under-Sheriff. The insult was too much for young Monck. He dashed into Exeter, which was then plague-stricken, did his duty faithfully, and was immediately smuggled away by friends to serve in the very expedition Charles had journeyed to see.

Such a fate, which was by no means unwelcome to a spirited younger son, decided his whole future. He became forthwith a soldier of fortune, one who took his profession more seriously than most men of his time, and in which he slowly rose to distinction.

Twice he served under the unhappy Buckingham, seeing the depths to which incompetence of organisation and command could sink, rendering as distinguished service as he could, and afterwards joining the forces of the States-General, to fight the Spaniards in the Low Countries. In these early years he made the acquaintance of many of the officers who on one side or the other were to become famous in the English Civil Wars. Not the least among them was Rupert of the Rhine, who in one fierce assault of a walled town served as a volunteer in Monck's own company.

Monck was thirty before he left the service of the States-General, left in disgust at his treatment by the citizens of Dort, who were unwilling to leave to his personal execution the punishment of certain of his men who had been guilty of riot. He returned to an England already clouded by the first signs of the coming struggle between King and Parliament. There was no question where Monck's almost traditional sympathies lay. They were uninfluenced by any wider consideration, for he had no interest in politics.

He served Charles faithfully, first in the indecisive war against the Scots, saving the English guns with his infantry at the rout of



Newburn Ford, and later under the Earl of Ormond in Ireland against the Papist rebels. When divergence of loyalties became more marked, and Ormond required his officers to take an oath, Monck, always 'tender of oaths,' and seeing another though unintended slight towards his professional conduct, flatly refused, and returned to England under escort, though with a warm recommendation from his commander.

The King was at pains to win the continued services of this sturdy but difficult soldier. He summoned him to Oxford, and there, at a personal interview, not only gained him completely, but gave him a command among his former Irish comrades, who were then investing Nantwich under Lord Byron. Monck rejoined them, and fought valiantly at their head against Fairfax. His luck was out. He found himself deserted, was captured by the Parliamentary commander, and was committed to the Tower of London.

Monck was in the Tower nearly two years. He was poor, and almost forgotten. His brother once sent him fifty pounds, and the King a hundred, an extraordinary mark of favour from impoverished Oxford, while Rupert of the Rhine once tried to get him exchanged; but for the most part he was lonely and miserable, except when under pressure to change his allegiance. Parliament were not slow in their efforts to win a professional soldier of such experience, but Monck, for all his poverty, would not betray his King.

At last an opportunity offered to serve in Ireland once more against the Papists. An oath was required, and there was the usual difficulty, but Monck, submitting at last, found himself with an active command in Ulster. He was soon, if almost imperceptibly, involved not merely against the rebels but against Ormond's royalists. After severe fighting, in which he won much reputation, he was again captured, at Dundalk, and was sent to England with a safe-conduct.

Here, at Milford Haven, he met Cromwell, then preparing for his Irish campaign. This meeting was highly significant. The two soldiers took an instant liking for one another: they were much of a temper, and until his death Monck was Cromwell's staunch adherent. Their King was dead; both men were patriots and veterans; both desired peace and a stable government; and both were in the habit of considering that the end justified the means.

When Cromwell returned from Ireland, he remembered Monck, and he gave him a regiment of infantry to serve in the Scots cam-

paign. This regiment was afterwards to win undying laurels as the Coldstream Guards, and is the sole direct descendant in the British Army of Cromwell's New Model.

Under Cromwell, Monck fought against Leslie. He led the van at Dunbar, and the result of that desperate victory was due as much to his council and valour as to that of Cromwell. After Dunbar, he helped to subdue the more important fortresses, and he was then granted leave of absence to England on account of ill-health.

Healed by the Bath waters, Monck was next ordered to Yarmouth, to superintend the fortifications of that town. He was then given a commission, together with Deane and Blake, to serve as a General-at-Sea against the Dutch. It may seem to-day a strange proceeding to offer command at sea to a man with so little nautical experience that he used to order his line of battle to 'Wheel to the right!' and to 'Charge!'; but the fact remains that by sheer valour and determination Monck and Deane, in Blake's absence, defeated and killed Tromp in a bloody battle off the Flanders coast, returning to Portsmouth to be acclaimed by the nation, and to find Oliver Cromwell Lord Protector of England.

After this first brief and glorious service at sea, Monck's influence lay in Scotland during the years which remained until his dramatic descent upon England in 1660. Cromwell rewarded him by the second most important post in his dominion; and from Dalkeith, after having subdued the Royalist highlands in a masterly campaign, Monck ruled Scotland with a firmness and justice which pleased the whole nation, who were as content under him as they would have been under any government but 'that of their lawful Prince.' Monck's intelligence service was magnificent; it rivalled that of Thurloe at Whitehall. He listened to every shade of opinion, allowed no liberty of action, and brought his own small army to such a state of efficiency that it had no rival in Europe at the time of Cromwell's death. As a soldier he had known defeat, and had profited by it. As an administrator he seems to have had a genius from the first. As a sailor he was merely brave and vigorous.

## II.

When Oliver Cromwell died, a contemporary remarked, 'not a dog barks, so great a calm are we in.' Edinburgh, like other cities, dutifully proclaimed Richard his son as Second Lord Protector. There was as little enthusiasm in the Scots capital as elsewhere for the event. 'Old George for my money!' cried one

soldier, and the sentiment in Monck's army was universal, for his men were devoted to him. He had led, fed, and served them well, and they trusted him to the hilt, as they were soon to show.

Monck had many temptations, now and henceforward, to assume an absolute power. He resisted them all. He offered his services to Richard, and, when Richard fell, to the attenuated remnant which sat in Whitehall and was known as the Rump Parliament. When the army, under the leadership of Lambert—an old rival, and now under suspicion of wishing for a dictatorship—attempted to coerce the Rump, Monck electrified England (who had overlooked his power), by declaring his intention of marching south to safeguard the authority of Parliament. To do this, it was necessary to secure Scotland and to restrain such of his own officers as he suspected of being disaffected. His actions were as prompt as they were uncompromising. They were completely successful, and he marched towards the Border at the head of a few thousand picked men.

The story of his march south is a great one. Lambert lay before him in strength. There were other leaders to be reckoned with, men like Fleetwood, and Fairfax, who was ready to raise a party for the King, and against whom, as a servant of Parliament, Monck would be forced to act. His advantage lay in his treasury, which was full. Lambert, who had no such resources, was compelled to put his men at free quarters, and, if the Scots army could only gain time, discontent would soon disperse the English forces.

Monck took up his headquarters at Coldstream, commanding one of the best fords over the Tweed. Not to know the story of its Colonel is to wonder why the Second Regiment of Foot Guards comes to be named after so small a place. At Coldstream, in the roughest quarters, and in bitter cold, Monck lay during the significant weeks which changed the English news from bad to good. First the fleet, and then the Irish army, expressed a guarded sympathy; then Fairfax explained that all he aimed at was a free Parliament, such as had not been held for twenty years; finally, although he made tentative advances, there came the news that Lambert's men were deserting, and that Fleetwood's had 'spit in his face.'

At dawn on the first day of 1660, Monck's army began their advance towards London, at first knee deep in snow. It was a tremendous and triumphant progress. Bells rang; the country people turned out in hundreds to cheer the troops, shouting for a free Parliament; bonfires blazed. At Newcastle, Monck met the

•

City of London Sword-bearer, who told him that London was unrepresented in the Rump, and implored his help towards a representative assembly; at York he found that Lambert had disappeared, while Fairfax rode into the city on the same errand as the Sword-bearer. Regimenting the pick of Lambert's men, Monck continued south, and at last entered London in state, where for the first time he and his men found their welcome uncertain. The citizens had learned to distrust all soldiers.

Monck, still nominally the obedient servant of Parliament, was now in effect the master of England. The Rump, with incredible foolishness, provoked the city into a declaration of non-payment of taxes, and then ordered Monck to dismantle the gates and portcullises. Monck, raging, obeyed, while the citizens were torn between their horror at such an insult, and amazement at seeing troops which gave their commander such obedience. But when Parliament continued its vindictive attitude to the city, the General rebelled. By openly declaring for a Free Parliament, he won the ecstatic devotion of London in a single afternoon. Rumps were roasted in the streets, and he and his men were the darlings of the hour.

When Parliament saw that he was earnest in intention, their Republican souls quaked, for a free Parliament meant a Restoration of the monarchy, and they knew it.

First they pressed Monck to declare his own opinions, and then, when he remained adamantly silent, they offered him the supreme power. He replied that he had the fate of the Cromwell family clear in his memory, and that he regarded the suggestion as treason. How secret he was at this time is remarked by Mr. Arthur Bryant, the biographer of Charles II, who calls him 'the most cautious man in the three kingdoms.' How difficult he was to approach was declared by the royalist Lord Mordaunt, who cried in exasperation: 'He is a black Monk, and I cannot see through him'—and then sent a report to Charles that he was sure he was a Republican!

Actually, unknown to Parliament, Monck was in communication with the King—but not with a view to any reward. He sent a messenger in the first instance because, as a patriot, he felt it his duty to warn Charles to leave Brussels, which was Spanish soil, lest he should be seized by that country and, in the event of a restoration, held to ransom. Charles took the hint with thanks and expectation, moving to Holland. If the master of England served him so at this time, it promised well for the future. Monck, he

declared, could within reason command him anything. Monck replied by suggesting the famous Declaration of Breda, the terms of which Charles accepted.

England was now witnessing the death-throes of the Commonwealth. Lambert headed a brief rising, but was captured without a struggle by Dick Ingoldsby, a regicide turned royalist. Meanwhile, the people were voting a Royalist Parliament to Westminster, London echoed to old songs, and when the new Houses met, all was over but the shouting, of which there was to be a good deal.

### III.

Charles II and Monck met on Dover beach : and Monck greeted his sovereign, to Charles's surprise and relief, with every mark of homage and affection. Monck with his army had kept the peace while England declared its will, but he still had power, did he so desire, to send the King on his travels again. Far from abusing that power, he was henceforward Charles's devoted subject. He served him as faithfully, as it was his custom to serve any master who employed his sword and used him justly.

Charles dealt well by him. He made him Duke of Albemarle, confirmed his army command, and gave him the choice of any of the great offices of State. Characteristically, Monck chose the Mastership of the House, the patronage of which was sufficiently extensive for him to be able to reward many of his old friends. As a Privy Councillor, his voice was an honoured one for the remainder of his life, and, with the exception of his lack of feeling towards Colonel Hutchinson, he was a staunch helper of those whose late opinions now caused them danger.

Monck's services did not end with the Restoration. He disbanded the standing army with an efficiency acknowledged even by Pepys, who was never one of his warmer admirers. Men of all ranks were found employment, while certain regiments of Guards were retained for the King's protection, and to keep order in London. It was thus that, besides the Coldstreamers, the Grenadiers or King's Foot Guards were formed, and the Regiments of Household Cavalry. They were recruited from among Monck's men, and their establishment gives him a just claim to be the first Commander of the British army as it is known to-day.

Nor was his service confined to strictly military affairs. Throughout the time of the great plague, when the Court had moved to Oxford, Monck, and the aged Archbishop of Canterbury, remained

at their posts in Whitehall with a cold and lovely courage, administering the affairs of the kingdom; and when the great fire broke out some years later, the King at once summoned Monck from the fleet, where he was then serving, to allay the panic. 'Had the little general been in London,' said one citizen, 'such a disaster could never have arisen.' Such was the feeling of the people towards the man who now seemed the embodiment of all that was best in the old régime.

Monck's later commands at sea were sadder than those of earlier days. The King hesitated to call upon him in his age, but the comparative failure as commanders of the Duke of York and Pepys's patron, the Earl of Sandwich, left him no choice but to appoint the two veterans Monck and Rupert of the Rhine to take their place. Although the two fought gallantly, they had little success against de Ruyter, and at the end of the campaign they had the humiliation of seeing their flagship, the *Royal Charles*, taken during the Dutch expedition up the Medway, where the ship lay temporarily dismantled. Thanks to Monck's personal example, the disgraceful incompetence of the Admiralty was rectified before the end of the war, and de Ruyter had no further success, although the Dutch secured what seemed to Monck a humiliating peace.

Monck died in January, 1670, on a cold morning just ten years after the start of his great advance to London. He met death in 'high Roman fashion,' sitting upright in his chair, with his officers about him. He lay in state for many weeks, and Charles himself, with real grief, took part in the magnificent funeral procession to Westminster Abbey.

#### IV.

Monck is overlooked, while the memory of many lesser men has lingered. That he had his good fortune in his lifetime there is no question. He deserved anything his country could bestow, for it was his strength, his ability to act, and his superb dissimulation which prevented a further outbreak of civil war; while had his personal ambition outrun his patriotism, and his desire that the people of England should by their own free will end a military despotism of which he himself was no mean part, there is no end to the mischief which he could have caused. A dukedom, the Garter, and a quarter of a million or so sterling were a modest enough reward for such benefits as no other single man could bestow.

His personal character was as simple and honest as his tastes were



plain, but neither so simple nor so honest that he could not deceive with devastating effect, both in battle and in diplomacy. He loved money, and he acquired it. He loved soldiering, and he organised a matchless army. He had a high estimation of himself, and he was fully honoured. If his personality and opinions inclined more nearly to the Parliamentary than to the Royalist type, he was a man of sense and humour, upon whom Shakespeare's line :

'Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be  
no more cakes and ale ?'

would not be lost.

There are several good pictures of Monck, among them one by Lely, in the National Portrait Gallery, which shows a face of splendid firmness, and an apple complexion which he retained almost to the end. It is wholesome and strong personality which the artist reveals—reminiscent of the cider of his native county.

The visitor to Westminster Abbey may see a hideous monument to Monck, in Henry VII's Chapel. This was erected in 1720 by the will of his son Christopher, second and last Duke of Albemarle, who died of drink. A plain stone marks his actual resting-place, which is near to that of Queen Elizabeth, a fit spot for such a man. In the Museum in the Cloisters his armour is preserved. It is a plain, dark suit, made for a little man, though a sturdy one. Near it is a fine cast of his head, the face evidently done from a death mask. His effigy, which has now disappeared, used to be one of the sights of London, payment to see being placed in his cap.

One of the junior officers present at Monck's funeral was a certain Ensign John Churchill, on whom his mantle in time descended, and who was to eclipse him in glory. Monck has had few biographers and many detractors, but none have cast aspersion on his qualities as a soldier, an administrator or a patriot. Pepys wrote a most unwilling epitaph in his *Diary*, which deserves to be quoted. 'I know not how, the blockhead Albemarle hath strange luck to be loved : though he be (and every man must know it) the heaviest man in the world, but stout and honest to his country.'

## THE CAT OF BEN-A-LONE.

BY F. G. TURNBULL.

IN a remote Highland glen, where the tang of peat reek drifts with the wind in the heather, you may hear the tale of Mahaar, the wildcat—the cat of Ben-a-lone. It is also the story of Sandy Grant, the keeper, a ruthless brute of a man, who defied superstition and vowed to wipe the wildcat off the face of the earth.

Farther back than memory or legend extends, the lithe grey hunters had ranged the mountain. Secure from molestation in the almost impregnable fastnesses, their number increased until it reached the point where severe pruning was imperative. War was declared on the killers. Two years of intensive hunting ensued ; at the end of that period only one cat remained—Mahaar, the greatest hunter the hill had ever known.

He measured four feet from end to end—a low-slung, yellow-eyed fiend with the devil himself in his soul. Pliant sinews of immense power rippled beneath his striped grey fur ; his short, clubbed tail was banded with nine black rings, and his black-soled paws were big and fiercely hooked.

Around him rumour wove tales of incredible killings. Stalkers admitted, somewhat reluctantly, that he combined the cunning of the whitefoot fox—an unusual trait in a cat—with the peerless courage of his own tribe.

Determined to complete their task, the men persisted in their efforts to slay the survivor. Then, quite unaccountably, things began to go wrong. Mishap after mishap befell those who sought the life of Mahaar. The more superstitious of the glen-dwellers looked up in awe to the great rock-armoured peak and shook their heads. The spirit of Ben-a-lone, they said, had risen in rebellion at the killing of its wildfolk.

Consistent misfortune convinced even the least credulous of the hunters that some uncanny influence was at work ; and, eventually, no one would venture up the mountain in pursuit of the remaining cat. From this fact was born a saying that still persists : ' There'll aye be cats on Ben-a-lone.'

. . . . .

At the approach of the following winter, old Peter Callum, the head-keeper, retired from active duty, and a new man came to take his place. The stranger, Sandy Grant, turned out to be a blustering bully. A man of immense physique, he thought much of himself. That he knew his job there was no doubt; but his overbearing manner and boastfulness earned for him the immediate and intense dislike of everyone with whom he came in contact.

He called upon Callum, and in the course of their conversation the old man mentioned the existence of the Ben-a-lone cat. In answer to his successor's request Callum related the history of the mountain hunters. Concluding, he said:

'An' the big cat that's left got a mate fae somewhaur a month or twa back, but we leave them alane; naeboddy'll gae up the hill efter them nooadays.'

Grant shook his head and looked down with ill-concealed contempt at the old man before replying:

'Ye should be ashamed tae admit it. Tae think ye're sae feared o' some damned auld supersteection that ye daurna' gae up the hill tae shoot the brutes. Eh, lord, what a pack o' auld weemin'. He laughed mockingly, then added: 'Weel, it's a guid job I've come. I'll put an end tae this sort o' nonsense.'

Old Callum looked sharply at his visitor.

'Aye,' he said, 'ye're lauchin', are ye; ye seem tae think it's a grand joke. But bide a wee; when ye've haen a try at it yersel' it'll no' seem sae domned funny. I've haen a leg an' four ribs broken when I was daft enough tae gang up the hill efter thae cats.'

'Mphm,' commented Grant, 'maybe, maybe; but it'll tak' a by-ordnar' cat tae frichten me. I'll sune hae them oot o' that.'

'Ye muckle fule,' broke in Callum, sharply, 'it's no' the cats ye need be feared o'; it's Ben-a-lane. Lauch if ye like, but I tell ye this: There's something up yon hill that's no' canny. Ye're runnin' a mighty risk when ye gae huntin' on the ben.'

The old man paused, then, abruptly, he asked: 'Hae ye seen the hill yet?'

'No,' replied Grant.

Callum rose stiffly from his chair and, limping across the kitchen, took his telescope from behind the door. Handing the glass to the other man, he summoned him to follow, then walked to the window. Pointing to where Ben-a-lone reared its mighty bulk skyward a couple of miles away, he said:

'Yon's the ben. Tak' a look at it an' see what ye think o'd.'

The big man focussed the glass and looked toward the mountain. At its western side, above a great forest of pines, it was footed by a terrific precipice a thousand feet in height—a sheer wall of wet and glistening rock, appalling in its grim suggestiveness. At its base lay, shattered to fragments and dust, rocks which had fallen long ages before, crashing down in the storm winds from the frowning heights above. Over the towering lip poured a white cascade—an icy stream of water from the higher snows. Its downward journey was stayed by the mountain wind which swept it in spray against the rock face where it trickled and dripped until lost in the knife-edge scree below.

From the brink of this ghastly pit the mountain-side rose steeply, boulder-strewn at first, with heath and ling, stunted and sparse, growing between. Beyond that was an inferno of shattered rock, gullies and crevices where never-resting winds echoed hollowly—hissing, moaning, and wailing a blood-chilling harmony. From here the peak shot skyward, a five-hundred-foot cone of black rock, ribbed and veined with snowdrifts that lasted the summer through. The teeth of Ben-a-lone were bared for elemental war—a war that knows no ending.

Standing by Grant's side, old Callum suddenly spoke :

'Look ye,' he said, 'awa' near the tap yonder, juist abune that lang drift, dae ye see yon black hole o' a gully?'

'Aye,' said Grant.

'Weel,' continued the old man, 'yon's whaur the cat bides. Noo, dae ye see that ridge o' rock wi' teeth like a saw along the tap o'd?'

'Mphm.'

'Yon's his look-oot. Whiles in the gloamin' o' a clear night ye'll see'm stannin' on ane o' thae points glowerin' doon intae the glen. Sae noo ye ken what's what.'

'Weel, he'll no' be there much langer,' said the new keeper. 'I'm gaein tae let ye see how tae deal wi' a job like this.'

'Ye're gaein up the hill efter him, then, are ye?' asked Callum.

'Of coorse I am!' exclaimed Grant. 'What wud ye think? A'bodys no' troubled wi' nerves an' supersteetion like yersel.'

'Weel-a-weel,' commented Callum. 'Juist go ahead. If ye're sae domned muckle cleverer than ither folk, ye'll mebbe manage better than I hae done; but I hae my doots. Dinna forget, though, it's no' juist the cats ye're up against; keep yer e'e on the hill.

Ye're a big man, Grant, but the ben's a mighty sicht bigger than you—a' weys !'

The new keeper looked down on his wizened old predecessor. 'Puir auld sowl,' he said pityingly, and took his leave.

During the next few weeks, Grant was fully occupied in acquainting himself with his new duties and looking over the land now in his charge. The first snow of winter had fallen before he had an opportunity to destroy the wildcats. Then, when he had at last made arrangements, there came the wildest storm the glens had ever known.

The wind from the north came roaring out of the depths of Polar night. Laden with snow it thundered through the Highlands. The leaden sky belched forth smothering masses of swirling flakes that choked the deepest corries. The blizzard appeared to close around and vent its wildest fury on the gigantic bulk of Ben-a-lone. Off the huge rock-girt shoulders wind-blasted wreaths spouted and writhed in snake-like pennants. They blew twisting away on the shrieking wind over the lesser hills that cowered for shelter behind their monarch whose ice-riven rock-fang battled with the legions of the North.

Day after day the storm-fiends raved and screamed their wrath amid the mountains ; then, when towering drifts were reared across the ridges, the wind blew itself out and sank sobbing away. The snow ceased, although the sky threatened a renewal at any moment. The temperature fell lower and lower until the cold was intense. Yielding to the clutch of cold, blue-fingered ice, running water hushed its song. And over the land lay a silence that only snow-bound hills and a windless sea can know.

The grouse shook the snow from their wings and journeyed southward ; beneath them, limping weakly across the never-ending whiteness, fared the mountain hares. Even the hardy ptarmigan surrendered to the Arctic and flew out with the grouse. For days the red deer had been stringing down from the hills. Wearily they threaded a tortuous route through the glens ; old hinds led the way while the stags in the rear drove the weaklings on. In hundreds they came, in single file, to the forest of Ben-a-lone. High on a jagged rim-rock a great cat watched them come—watched until the last and biggest stag had vanished beneath the snow-capped pines.

Mahaar and his mate were now forced to leave the mountain

in search of food. Each went its own way, and each fared badly. Soon their plight was desperate. Then Grant saw the she-cat come down to the glen one evening; in the morning he saw her go back. And he knew that he could capture her if the bitter cold continued.

An hour later, the keeper went to the foot of the hill and set a fox-trap at a point where the cat had passed. With a piece of wire he fastened a live rabbit to the trap pin and put down a handful of crushed oats to preserve it in life. Then he departed to await results.

Early in the afternoon, Mahaar leapt to a point of the rim-rock and glared with a scowl over the world of white beneath. His head swung slowly from side to side as he scanned the slopes. Then, suddenly, he became rigid and stared fixedly at something that moved along a distant hillside. It was a hind in distress; her eyes were red with frost, and lumps of ice-hard snow clung and dangled on her hair. After losing sight of the main herd in the storm, she had become hopelessly embedded in a drift that held her for twenty hours before she succeeded in floundering through to freedom. And now starvation, cold and fatigue had done their work; her strength was nearly spent.

Intently the big cat watched the wretched animal's progress as she slowly approached the forest. Once she stumbled and fell, and Mahaar instantly leapt to his feet, only to sink again as the hind arose and stumbled on.

At the edge of the trees the deer collapsed once more; the cat sprang up, then, when the hind failed to rise, he left the rim-rock and padded swiftly down through the drifts.

Soon after Mahaar had gone, his mate, Mahael, left her own lair and descended the mountain in another direction in search of food. Twenty minutes later, a captive rabbit uttered a squeal of terror when the gaunt she-cat arose from the snow and hurled herself in a magnificent leap upon it. Instantly there was a muffled click and a hideous snarl of rage as the steel jaws of the fox-trap clenched on Mahael's foreleg and smashed the bone.

From her couch in the snow the exhausted hind raised her head abruptly and looked about. Her nostrils flared and the whites of her eyes showed. Then she gave a great start and tried desperately to arise. For there, glaring at her from under the sagging boughs of the snow-mantled pines, was the fiendish mask of the Ben-a-lone



cat. His long fangs were bared, his ears were flattened down, and his blazing yellow eyes foretold impending doom. Here would the killer end his fast.

Frantically the hind struggled to her feet. With her whole body quivering she faced the dreaded cat. Slowly, menacingly, the long grey form emerged and stood revealed in all his savage splendour. The deer half-rose on her hind legs, coughed and dropped back again. She turned aside as though to enter the forest, but with one bound Mahaar blocked her way and crouched, eyeing her with twitching tail. Then, almost imperceptibly, he drew back on his haunches, the deer watching him in a fascinated manner.

For some seconds the cat lay back on his tensed sinews as though weighing his chances against such a bulky quarry. Suddenly, before the hind had time to move, the cat was spreadeagled on her shoulder. She reared, spearing upward with her sharp fore-hoofs in a vain endeavour to dislodge her hunger-maddened assailant.

Staggering to and fro under the weight of the cat that clung like a monstrous weasel to her neck, the hind uttered hoarse grunts of terror. Far along the forest, Bighorn, a royal stag, lifted his head and listened. The twigs rattled against his spreading antlers—antlers whose twists and irregularities were the annually recurring testimony to mighty battles of the past.

Behind the royal four lesser stags now raised their heads and listened too. Presently there came again the hoarse, choking bark of a hind in distress. The royal plunged away through the trees, and in his wake the others followed.

Back at the fringe of the forest the hind lay flat upon her side. Blood flowed from a ragged wound in her neck; she died quickly, and Mahaar feasted. Soon, there came from within the trees the click of a snapping twig. The cat spun round with a threatening snarl as five stags burst from the pines and slid to a stop four yards away. Bighorn snorted and plunged, a red flame flooding his eyes. The younger stags, dreadfully thin, trembled when they winded the cat and saw their leader prepare for battle.

Without warning, the royal charged, and his slashing fore-hoofs would have pounded the cat to rags. But the agile hunter shied off like lightning, then, in an incredibly swift movement, he pounced back, lashed a rapier-hooked paw across the stag's face and was gone in a flurry of snow. The stags wheeled round, snorted, and bounded in pursuit of the fleeing cat.

On the edge of the precipice, Mahaar paused to look back. Whilst he listened, there came to his ears a long-drawn wail from the wind-riven peak. A flake of snow fell from the darkening sky ; others followed, gradually thickening, then again came the cry of the wind in the heights—respite was over : the legions of the North had leapt again to arms.

Sandy Grant came round from the rear of his house to stare intently toward Ben-a-lone. Then he darted through the doorway and reappeared with a telescope. He put it to his eye for an instant, then he banged the glass shut.

‘Hey! MacLeod! MacLeod!’ he bawled.

At the door of another cottage there appeared the youthful keeper whom he summoned—a man who had nearly lost his life whilst hunting the cats when the year was young.

‘What dae ye want?’ asked MacLeod.

‘There’s ane o’ the cats in the trap,’ Grant replied. ‘Get my dogs an’ come wi’ me. Look sharp, noo! We havna’ much time ; it’ll sune be dark.’

He then got his gun, and, a moment later, MacLeod returned with the dogs—savage, clever brutes with a strain of the lurcher in them, and specially trained for killing foxes in hilly country. They were the private property of Grant, and he was immensely proud of them.

Soon the two men were trudging through the deep snow toward the mountain. A puff of icy wind met them, and fine flakes of snow came softly down to cling to their clothes.

‘Looks like bein’ a bad nicht,’ remarked MacLeod.

‘Aye,’ replied Grant, ‘for the cats.’

Meanwhile, snarling quietly with pain, Mahael bit through the sinews of her broken limb. Unable to pull the paw free, she had resorted fearlessly to the only alternative method of escape. Glancing up, she noted the men in the distance. Viciously, she renewed her efforts, and, in a little, was free. The dead paw hung limp in the grip of the saw-toothed steel. Mahael sniffed it, curiously, then turned about and limped away up the mountain, leaving a trail of blood where she trod.

‘Look yonder, man!’ roared Grant. ‘The damned brute’s gotten awa’. Here! Lat thae dogs loose!’

The big man seized the animals by the scruff of their necks and pointed their heads in the direction of the receding cat.

'Look, whalps, look!' he growled. 'Go on, noo, get it!'

In a flurry of snow the dogs sped silently away, and the men hurried along as fast as they could in the rear. Within a few minutes the disabled cat was overtaken by the pursuing hounds. She wheeled about and faced them. They halted, growling, then began to circle around the crouching animal, the hair on their necks stiff and erect, and the whites of their eyes showing.

Suddenly one darted in and seized the cat by the haunches. Mahael whipped round and lashed a claw-tipped paw across the dog's face. The creature yelped and sprang back, and, instantly, the other dog attacked. In a moment all three were indistinguishable in a whirling *mêlée* of fur-clad bodies and flying snow.

With harsh growls rumbling in her throat, the wildcat fought furiously, but she was sorely handicapped by the loss of her paw. She knew that death was hovering just at hand, and she screamed—a wild, eldritch yell. But it was not a yell of fear; it was a summons—a cry for help.

Aloft on the rim-rock, the killer of deer crouched listening for the stags that sought him. Then, faint and afar, he heard the voice of the she-cat—the scream of his own mate. And she called for aid from him—Mahaar, the mighty cat of Ben-a-lone.

In one astounding leap the wildcat cleared the gully, and in great bounds raced madly down the hill. Thickly falling snow limited vision to a few yards. Some distance below, Bighorn and his followers still were searching. The great stag had no idea where his enemy could be, but he shook his antlers and roared a challenge to all comers. And he never jumped so high in his life as he did when Mahaar appeared suddenly out of the gloom, screamed in his face and shot from sight down the mountain. Heaven help anything that tried to halt the hunting cat that night.

Mahaar gave no warning of his arrival. But when Mahael heard a wild yell by her side and felt one of the dogs torn from its hold to go spinning away with a howl in the snow, she knew that her mate had come.

A terrific battle ensued as the Ben-a-lone cat mauled the dog with the utmost fury. Tufts of hair shot out, expelled by swiftly striking claws as the killer lashed the dog to rags. Screaming in terror, the dog strove vainly to escape the striped grey devil that flayed him. Then he collapsed, and his jerking limbs relaxed as he stretched out to shudder once, and died.

Mahaar left his victim and turned in fury upon the dog that

held Mahael. It released its hold and sprang aside. The she-cat immediately withdrew, and her mate crouched to leap. Then the men appeared.

Grant threw up his gun and fired as the big cat sprang at the lurcher's face—and the dog fell dead with a charge of goose-shot in his neck. Instantly, there was a ripple of grey fur, and Mahaar had vanished in the storm.

'Come on!' shouted the furious Grant, as he made to follow the retreating cats. 'We'll get them afore they can gae far; the she's got only three legs.'

'Damned the fear!' retorted MacLeod; 'I'm no' gaein up the hill efter them, especially on a nicht like this. I've tried it afore, an' aince is enough for me.'

'Ye'll dae as ye're bidden,' roared Grant. 'Come on, here, when ye're telt!'

'Ye can gae tae hell!' MacLeod barked back. 'I'm no' comin'.'

Grant stuck his face close to that of the other.

'Are ye no'?' he snarled. 'Weel, tak' that, an' damned weel bide whaur ye are!'

As he spoke, he hit the younger man across the mouth with the butt of his gun, knocking him to the ground. Then he turned and followed the trail of blood-spots that led upward. The deepening gloom of night and the steadily thickening snow rendered the spoor difficult to follow, but, goaded by fury at the loss of his dogs, Grant bent to his task and blundered on.

Mahael was making slow progress; the worrying she had received and her smashed leg slowed her down. By her side, suiting his pace to hers, strode her mate. Presently she lay down to rest, and at that moment Mahaar spotted the advancing keeper. He uttered a threatening scream, a scream that was answered from a point but a few yards away, by the challenging roar of Bighorn.

There came a plunging sound as the stags charged down on the cats. Mahaar's yell betrayed his position. Grant saw him dimly and raised his gun. The Ben-a-lone took a hand. Bighorn stumbled over a projecting rock and fell with a crash, his followers tumbling over him. The impact loosened a large patch of snow; it commenced to slide gently down the steep slope. Momentarily distracted by the appearance of the stags, the man had held his fire. And the cats, feeling the first movement of the snow, darted ahead and dropped into the stream-bed.

Slowly at first, but gaining impetus as its area increased, the snowslide assumed greater proportions and became an avalanche. Grant gazed in horror and turned to flee downward. The moving snow whispered and growled as it followed him, and the harsh grating of rock upon rock rose to a thunderous roar.

The running man pulled up suddenly when he found himself on the edge of the precipice. He ran wildly along the brink, turned and dashed back again, then ran crazily upward to meet the descending snow. The vast slide met him, tripped him up and gathered him into its seething mass among the bellowing stags. Downward with ever-increasing noise and speed the grinding snowfield surged. Then, reaching the overhanging lip, it cracked up and poured into the yawning chasm, leaving in its wake a long bare patch of mangled earth.

Silence reigned for a time, then a dull rumble echoed up from the glen and muttered to silence away in the darkness at the peak. The wind strengthened, with the wail of the storm-fiends in the crags; snow streamed down—huge flakes from an angry sky. And above the howl of the wind came the weird, wild yell of Mahaar as he perched on a spike of the rim-rock.

At the foot of the mountain Dave MacLeod had heard in awe the boom of the avalanche, but he did not go immediately. He waited, listening intently, while the whirling snow whitened his clothes and the blood from his broken lips congealed on his chin. Then his head jerked up and he peered toward the unseen heights. On the wind he heard the cry of the hunter on the rock. MacLeod shook his head and sighed as he turned away.

'Ay, ay,' he said, 'the auld folk were richt efter a': "There'll aye be cats on Ben-a-lone."'

## TALES OF A GUIDE.

BY THURSTAN TOPHAM.

*Telephore Paradis is his real name. But he is generally known as 'Pete,' which, though not so high-sounding, is much more convenient to the tongue. He is the most reliable of all the guides who serve our fishing-club camp in the Laurentians, and members who secure his attendance are fortunate indeed. For Pete is a willing worker, a tireless canoe paddler, a veritable storehouse of information on wood lore and he has an almost uncanny flair for finding fish; altogether a fine type of the best French Canadian of the bush, a true descendant of the old 'coureurs-du-bois.' His age is hard to guess at; he might be anywhere between thirty-five and fifty. His face, heavily moustached, is weather-beaten and lined; his height medium, though he would be tall but for a certain shortness in the sturdy legs; his shoulders are broad and he stoops slightly from carrying canoes and packs over many portages. He served overseas with the Twenty-second Battalion and won a decoration at Regina Trench, I believe. He is married now and has a neat, white-painted wooden house down in the village. He owns a couple of cows and some hens, and his wife supplies our camp with milk and eggs. He spends most of his time during the summer around the clubhouse, working at various odd tasks, in addition to acting as guide. Carpentry, boat and canoe repairing and such-like jobs keep him busy—he is always ready in an emergency. As a young man he worked largely in lumber camps, and did some trapping for furs.*

*He has an independent nature and is apt to be somewhat aloof to new-comers until he has sized them up in his mind; but to good fishermen who treat him with the consideration he deserves he will show real respect and friendship. To others who do not measure to his standards he is coldly polite and may even pretend that he cannot understand English. He has little, if any, knowledge of reading and writing; his book is Nature's, which he studies season by season, carefully storing up wisdom.*

*In the bush, or on the lake, he is not loquacious and rarely speaks except to answer a question or to point out an unnoticed rise, or to mark the appearance of a rare bird or animal, but in the evening after supper, when his work is done, he may be moved to tell a story, especially*



after an unusually good fish has been landed during the day. He carries in his head a fund of legends, folklore handed down by word of mouth for generations, tales too of things he has heard of or seen; some are comic, some tragic, some frankly burlesque and impossible—but even to these last he will pretend an air of veracity and add the most circumstantial details, all of which is belied by the humorous twinkle in his eyes.

He speaks a quaint broken English, interspersed with a few French words, which though at first a little difficult to follow, has a charm of its own. He has an odd habit of mixing his genders. In the following tales I have tried to imitate his speech. Imagine him seated at one corner of the fire, his face shining redly in the light of a burning log, his bushy moustache drooping over the stem of his pipe.

### I. THE TALKING DOG.

'A CIGAR? Eef you pliz, m'sieu. Me, I'm not lak' smoke cigar moch, but she's good for pipe w'en she's broke in wit' de *tabac*.

You h'ask me tole you story to-night. *B'en oui*, I weel tole you 'bout ole man Poulin w'at keep de hotel at St. Polycarp an' hees dog. I'm t'ink of heem to-day w'en y'ong M'sieu Duff w'at he's talk all de time say to me I'm nevaire spik moch. Dat's more better say not'ing than say too moch.

Dees ole man Poulin he's mak' good beesness wit' hotel, he's mak' plenty money. He's fonny kind of feller, leetle beet stupid some tam', leetle bit lak' miser, but de firs' t'ing he's got in hees mind dat's de beesness! He pay good money for advertise de hotel, he keep de nice-looking waitress, he's geev good board and clean room, h'always *première classe* I'm tole you!

He's got fine beeg dog, also, verree nice fren'ly dog, dat make frien' wit' all hees guest' on de hotel. Dat dog he's know h'everybody, he's got de bes' *intelligence*. Ole man Poulin he's train dat dog wear spectacle' and hol' pipe in hees mout', dat's make de peop' laugh. He's ron all h'over de hotel, an' he's name Boule.

De ole man, he's not got beeg familiee excep' de one son Alphonse. Dat boy he's bring h'up very stric', he's geev heem not much money for spen', and w'en he's fineesh on de school at St. Polycarp he's decide for send him on de *collège* at Quebec. He's tole Alphonse eef he get de bes' *éducation* he weel know how to run de hotel beesness more bettaire.

So he sen' Alphonse on de *collège*, he's pay de charge for de *collège*, but he's mak' verree small *portion* for Alphonse to pay hees

room and board, so dat feller he's got not moch lef' for have de good tam'.

An' Quebec she's beeg city, an' Alphonse she's yo'ng feller full of de devil, he's lak' leetle fon, he's lak' take girl to de dance some tam'; he's fin' verree soon he's need more monee. He's write de fader, but de ole man won't geev heem no more; he's tight, lak' I'm tole you. Alphonse, he's not get moch *plaisir* on Quebec, he's study de book h'all de tam'.

De firs' *vacation*, he's come home on St. Polycarp, an' de ole man he's verree please' w'en he fin' hees son mak' good progress on hees study; an' Alphonse try once more to get more beeg *portion*. Hees fader refuse, no matter w'at he say. So Alphonse, w'at he's got bright idea on de head, he's consider w'at he's going for do.

An' 'bout de en' of de *vacation* he's seet on de porch wit' hees fader, and de dog he's seet wit' dem an' ack lak' he's listen on de *conversation*. An' purty soon Alphonse look at de dog an' he say, "*Mon père*, w'y you don' send Boule on de *collège* wit' me?" De ole man laugh an' say, "W'at's de matter, you talk crazee like dat?" But Alphonse he look verree *sérieux* and he say, "Don' I never tole you dey have special class on de *collège* for de dog?" His fader say, "You try make me b'lieve dat?"

Alphonse he's wise boy. He's not try *argument*; he say not'ing, but he's keep *sérieux*. He know hees fader! An' soon de ole man h'ask again. Alphonse say eef hees fader not believe heem he say no more. Dat's not long before de ole man want fin' out 'bout de *collège* for de dog'. So Alphonse tole him—he say, "Dat's only leetle tam' dey start teach de dog', but dey make beeg success, an' I t'ink maybe dat's good beesness for de hotel eef we have dog w'at can talk to de guest!"

"Talk to de guest!" de ole man shout. "You try for tole me de dog spik like 'uman?"

"*Certainement*, fader. Of course, dat's take some tam'. De firs' t'ing dey learn de h'alphabet, just lak' de small keed. After w'ile dey learn de short word, an w'en dey commence spik good dey graduate into *geographie* an' *mat'ematique* an'——"

"By gar, dat's *merveilleux*!" say de fader. "For *certain* I'm send Boule wit' you w'en you go back on de *collège*. W'at dat will be *grand avertissement* for de hotel. Figure yourself, w'en dat dog we send him to de C.P.R. for meet de train, she's going bring back plenty beesness!"

So Alphonse, he's feex dat very nice. He's tole de ole man

de charge on de *collège* is de same for de dog as for heemself, an' de ole man he's not mak' no kick. He's tole him also de dog mus' stay on special boarding-'ouse for de dog student', an' he's get more money for dat ! All w'at Alphonse tole heem, hees fader believe, an' de boy he's part for Quebec wit' Boule, an' money in hees pocket.

Yo'ng Alphonse now have purty nice tam' on Quebec ; he's get sweet'art, he's go on party, he's feel moch 'appy. De wors' is w'en his fader write h'ask 'ow Boule mak' de progress ; but he geev report an' say dat Boule he's lazy at de firs' and don't try hard verree moch, he's 'fraid maybe better tak' heem back on St. Polycarp. De next day he's receive telegram w'at say, "Let de dog stay. Beat heem good an' tole heem I'm not pay good money for heem waste de time."

Alphonse purty near bu'st himsel' for laugh, special w'en he t'ink 'ow he's sold de dog to captain on Saguenay boat de same day. Dat's locky for heem his fader never t'ink for pass on Quebec. Dat ole man Poulin he's nevaire leave St. Polycarp for twenty year', he's 'fraid somet'ing go wrong on de hotel if he's not dere on de job.

Before de next *vacation* Alphonse write and tole hees fader dat Boule ees not allow' for leave de *collège* only w'en he's fineesh hees course, on account de peopl' w'at ron de *collège* 'fraid de dog' forget all w'at dey learn eef dey get de holiday too queek. But he tole him also dat Boule she's be study verree good, she's top on de class now, and de *professeurs* very moch please' wit' de work she's do. So he's get pas' de firs' *vacation*, and he's take back de money for de next *session*.

At las' de tam' ees come w'en Boule he's s'pose fineesh his *éducation*. Alphonse mak' heem good report' and de ole man he's very anxious for meet de dog once more. Alphonse t'ink *he's* come to de fineesh too ; and he know dere will be plenty troub' w'en he 'ave to tell his fader 'ow he deceive heem. He's not lak' for t'ink 'bout dat. But hees sweet'art, she's bright girl too, and she's tole Alphonse w'y don't he write his fader and say 'ow Boule pass hees final examination wit' de *honneurs*, an' all de *professeurs* beg heem tak' de extra diploma course, w'at weel mak' heem de bestest most educate' dog on de whole worl'. So Alphonse t'ink eet's no worse for mak' de trial an' he write de ole man. Ole Poulin he want for see de dog very bad, but he tole heemself mebbe dat's more better let Boule 'ave de chance and de more educate' he's get de more proud he weel be for heem.

So once more yet Alphonse he's put off de troub'.

But de day for reckon she boun' *pour arriver*. Alphonse ees come to de end of de rope at las' ! De ole man ees impatient for see de dog so *miraculeux*. Alphonse don' write heem not'ing, but he's purty near catch de fever on de brain for t'ink of w'at he's going tole hees fader w'en he meet heem, an' he's not geev up hope, up to de tam' w'en he's get on de train for St. Polycarp.

Ole Poulin, he's all excite'. He's mak' a party for meet de train. Ole Madame Poulin, she's come too. She's got not de best temper, she's geev de ole man de devil some tam' because she's dat kind of stupid woman dat suspec' de wors' for h'everybody. But to-day she's feel good on account of Alphonse come home. Poulin, he's t'ink more 'bout de dog.

Well, de train she pull on de station. De ole man he's de firs' for meet Alphonse w'en he step h'off.

"W'ere ees Boule ? Let me see de dog *tout-de-suite*," he shout.  
"W'ere ees Boule ?"

Alphonse look at heem an' put hees finger on hees mout'.  
"Fader," he say, "I mus' spik to you private. Somet'ing de most *sérieux*. Don't let nobody come near !"

So de fader and de son dey walk leetle way h'up de platform. De res' of de party wait. Ole Poulin he's w'ite on de face.

"W'at has 'appen ?" he demand.

"Ssh," say Alphonse an' he w'isper, "Eet's de bad news w'at I've got for tole you."

"Tole me queeck," say de fader.

"Eet's dees way," w'isper Alphonse. "I arrive on de station at Quebec wit' Boule, an' he's mak' me very proud de way he's be'ave. All de passenger' come for admire and spik wit' him and he's answer most *gentil*. But you know dere ees special regulation w'at de dog not allow' for travel on de passenger coach. She mus' go on de baggage car. I'm mak' *argument* dat Boule ees deerferent now he's educate' and Boule spik up very good too. But de beeg boss on de station he say he's sorry, but de law say Boule *mus'* go h'on de baggage car. He mak' de *apologie* to Boule and Boule say he onderstan' and he not bear no malice eef dat's de law, but he not t'ink dat's very good law ! So we put heem in de baggage car."

"I'm not worry for dat," say ole Poulin, "dat's best Boule not give himsel' too many h'air' ! Don' play de fool, but bring de dog h'out !"

"Wait, fader. I'm not fineesh! De wors' she's not come yet. Me, I'm leave Boule on de baggage car because I've got some frien' on de train and I don't worry 'bout heem because he's having nice chat wit' de baggage man. But 'bout twen'y, t'irty mile before we come to St. Polycarp I go down de corridor to de baggage car for get heem ready. I meet de baggage man coming h'out of de car an' he say Boule ees all ready an' he know he's get near home. So I go on de car an' Boule say 'ow glad he is for com' home again an' see all de folks w'at he's fond of, and he spik 'bout you, fader, most grateful, for give him de *éducation*. And at las', fader, he say, 'I'm t'ink very high of de ole man, but dere ees one t'ing I don' lak'. I hope he's stop dat!' I ask heem w'at ees dat he don' lak'. He say, 'I don' lak' de way he make love to dat nice fat cook, Annette, all de tam'. Mebbe he t'ink he fool de madame and de res' of you, but he don' fool me! I'm going for spik to him 'bout dat, an' if dat don' do no good I'll go further!'

Well, fader, you know me. I'm good son for you. I'm not go for hear no *vaurien* dog spik lie 'bout *my* fader. So I'm do some-t'ing very bad w'at mak' me very moch ashamed I should tole you. I'm seize dat dog by de collar an' I'm keek him right t'roo de side door of de baggage car, wat she's open to let in de h'air. Boule he's fall on de oder track, and de same tam' anoder train come along w'at ees pass h'over de poor dog. Now I'm tole you all!"

De ole man Poulin, he look at Alphonse, wit' hees mout' open. Nex' he look roun' on de party. Den he turn to Alphonse an' he say, "My boy, you do de correc' t'ing! But, Alphonse," he w'isper, "Are you sure de son of a gun ees dead?"

(To be continued.)

## THE RUNNING BROOKS.

- The Young King: A Play*: Laurence Binyon (Macmillan, 6s. n.).  
*Four Plays*: F. L. Lucas (Cambridge University Press, 8s. 6d. n.).  
*Poems, 1935*: F. L. Lucas (Cambridge University Press, 6s. n.).  
*Epitaph on George Moore*: Charles Morgan (Macmillan, 5s. n.).  
*The Letters of John Keats*: Edited by M. Buxton Forman (Oxford University Press, 12s. 6d. n.).  
*Glory and Downfall*: General Polovtsoff (Bell, 15s. n.).  
*Südsee: Travels in the South Seas*: Hugo Adolf Bernatzik (Constable, 10s. 6d. n.).  
*Mr. Theobald's Devil*: Anna Gordon Keown (Macmillan, 7s. 6d. n.).  
*The Prophet Child*: Gwendolen Plunket Greene (Longmans, 6s. n.).  
*Mary Poppins Comes Back*: P. L. Travers (Lovat Dickson, 5s. n.).

MR. LAURENCE BINYON'S play, *The Young King*, is not wholly new in that earlier versions have been produced for special audiences at Oxford, Nottingham, and Canterbury, but it is now given to the general reader for the first time in its full form. It is beyond question by much the finest poetic drama of our time, and for its life and vigour as well as its poetry is a worthy successor even to the works of the great English dramatists. It is the story of the rebellion against Henry II of his son, whom he had rashly had crowned in his own lifetime, presented less as an historical than as a human drama. Henry's own dynamic, restless character is drawn with masterly force, and there are also many passages of great beauty, as for instance Queen Eleanor's speech in Scene V. This is work that shows the range of Mr. Binyon's high gifts: it is to be hoped that an enterprising manager with faith in the response of an audience will one day present it on the London stage so that it may be not only read but also seen and heard as a living witness of the strength of poetic drama.

Mr. F. L. Lucas will be particularly remembered by our readers as the author of two recent articles on Iceland. His newly published *Poems, 1935*, do more than reveal his versatility. They show that, believing as he does, 'that it is still worth while to write in English, in metre, and to be understood,' he has already done much to justify the gloriously sane sentiments of his Preface. Many of the pieces in this volume have the authentic ring. His verse means



something: it sings and soars. In short, Mr. Lucas is a poet. But let him beware of mingling politics and poetry—a very difficult brew. He is also a dramatist of some experience. Of his *Four Plays*—a modern tragedy in Cornwall, a modern comedy in Sussex, the third set in the Iceland of A.D. 1000, the fourth treating of the conflict between German and Jew under the Hitler régime—the first two have already been produced by the People's Theatre, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. All are primarily designed to meet the requirements of the modern repertory theatre—the movement which during the past few years has gained so steadily in strength and impetus that Mr. Lucas is by no means alone in regarding it as the main hope of the drama in England.

Readers of Mr. Charles Morgan's *Epitaph on George Moore* will, like its writer, be saddened by the enforced abandonment of the full biography on which, in accordance with George Moore's personal and testamentary wish, he had been occupied for several years. In the circumstances this brief, authoritative monograph dealing with the evolution of the genius who 'twice . . . re-created the English novel' and analysing the process by which he brought about a 'perfect marriage of form with purpose' becomes doubly valuable and important. Since it cannot, unfortunately, be regarded as a forerunner, its valedictory significance as the work of an intimate friend and uniquely qualified appraiser is all the deeper both in the present and for the future.

Mr. M. Buxton Forman's new edition, in one volume, of *The Letters of John Keats* is unquestionably a monument of patient labour and will be greatly valued by all those lovers of the poet who could not or did not procure the fine but expensive two-volume edition of 1931: to the letters in that ten are now added, and this edition would certainly be regarded as definitive if only Mr. Buxton Forman had delayed publication long enough to enable him to utilise Mrs. Adami's new discoveries. As it is, writing his preface on September 5 he says he hopes her Essay on Fanny Keats will 'shortly appear in print' whereas it was published in CORNHILL in October, and the account of her recent visit to Spain, which would have enabled him to correct or amplify his statements as to several letters and other matters, will appear in CORNHILL in February and will complete for ever the wonderful story of the letters to Fanny Keats. But the new edition, though not final, is nevertheless much to be welcomed and the five portraits of the frontispiece are a delightful addition.

The life of General Polovtsoff, as described in his autobiography, *Glory and Downfall*, in its richness and variety of adventure proves once again that fact is often more exciting than fiction. Serving his military apprenticeship with the Cossacks, he later joined a Guards cavalry regiment, saw service in the Russo-Japanese war, was military attaché in London and in India, did intelligence work in Turkestan, and commanded, during the Great War, the famous Caucasian (Savage) division from its mobilisation. During the Russian revolution he was for a time head of the garrison in St. Petersburg. The story of his ultimate escape from the country, disguised as an American missionary, reads like a chapter from a first-rate 'thriller.' In addition to being quite obviously a brilliant soldier, General Polovtsoff possesses the gifts of terse narrative, humour, and a sense of proportion. His book is both interesting and entertaining.

Adventure, though in a very different setting, has also been the chosen lot of Dr. Hugo Adolf Bernatzik whose *Südsee* or *Travels in the South Seas* is beautifully and profusely illustrated by photographs taken by himself. The book is an account of the expedition undertaken by this distinguished Viennese ethnologist and explorer in 1932-33 to the Solomon Islands, New Guinea, and Bali, and of his first-hand study of the lives, tribal, individual, and religious, of the natives with whom he lived in close personal contact. It is an exceedingly interesting picture, drawn without sentiment but with keen sympathy, and those especially for whom the word 'nigger' still retains any opprobrious significance will learn much from Dr. Bernatzik's scholarship and from his graphic presentation of a fascinating subject.

Miss Anna Gordon Keown has a gay and trenchant pen, and if we would fain have seen more of *Mr. Theobald's Devil* as such (for is he not, at the beginning, what the Germans call a *poltergeist* who torments most of us at times with his abominable habits as a kleptomaniac?) we have at least the satisfaction of knowing him thoroughly discomfited when Mr. Theobald, emancipated from the tyranny of the lady of the manor, bestows his clerical heart and hand upon her attractively middle-aged half-sister. An engaging story this, redolent of rural quietude, told with its author's accustomed skill in characterisation, and spiced, though never to the point of bitterness, with the gentle satire that makes all her work so individual and so stimulating.

Governed by the text, 'Unless you become as little children

you shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven,' the thesis of *The Prophet Child* by Mrs. Gwendolen Plunket Greene would appear to be an application to the soul's progress of Hegel's triple curve of life which, beginning in the simplicity of childhood, passes through the stages of adolescent scepticism and returns upon itself in that simplicity of old age which is so similar to, and yet so different from, its earlier form. Not perhaps a book for the general reader, the thoughtful religious public, if not deterred by the rather unconvincing quality of its first section, will find much to make a strong appeal in its two last, the chapter on 'Understanding' being particularly illuminating.

Conceited, priggish, addicted to satire and sniffing, awe-inspiring and—adored, *Mary Poppins Comes Back* to the Banks family at the end of a string attached to a kite and departs from them upon a celestial merry-go-round. The adventures packed between her coming and her going put Mr. ? (is the author a man, I wonder ?) P. L. Travers on a like pinnacle with herself. This is no ordinary story-telling, but the very distillation of magic from common things as cosy as a nursery at tea-time, as alluring as the smell of buttered toast. Presumably that is why the reading of this enchanting book for children produces in an adult so unaccountable, and yet so sweet, a tightness in the throat.

## SOME OTHER RECENT BOOKS.

*Remember David* : Maud Flannery (Methuen, 7s. 6d. n.).

A novel which treats the history of the priest-king of Israel as a mystical study with imaginative and spiritual insight.

*King Lehr and the Gilded Age* : Elizabeth Drexel Lehr (Constable, 12s. n.).

A biographical, often amazing, picture of America's 'Four Hundred' in the pre-war world.

*March Hare* : (Oxford University Press, 7s. 6d. n.).

The transcribed autobiography of Elsa Smithers : life in South Africa from many interesting angles.

*The Spirit of Ireland* : Lynn Doyle (Batsford, 7s. 6d. n.).

A welcome addition to the beautiful 'British Heritage' series.

*Modern Short Stories* : (Lovat Dickson, 3s. 6d. n.).

Re-printed from 'Lovat Dickson's Magazine'.

*Pursuit* : Geoffrey Lapage (Heffer, 2s. n.).

Sixty sonnets written in the intervals of biological research : expressive of the emotional conflict following an attempt to reconcile scientific results with universal values.

*Side Table* : Sir Patrick Ford (Moray Press, 3s. 6d. n.).

Sixty short poems, pictorial, emotional, and reminiscent, several of which have appeared in CORNHILL.

M. E. N.

## THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

## DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 147.

THE Editor of the CORNHILL offers two prizes of books to the value of £1 from John Murray's catalogue, to the two solvers of the Literary Acrostic whose letters are opened first. Answers must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must contain the Coupon from page iv of the preliminary pages of this issue. They must reach the Editor by the 30th January.

And answer, ———, dying, dying, dying.

1. Now ryse up, ———, deckèd as thou art  
In royall array ;

And now ye daintie Damsells may depart  
Eche one her way.

2. But O, that deep romantic chasm which slanted  
Down the green hills athwart a ——— cover !

3. A brighter ——— rears its mountains  
From waves serener far ;

4. Soothing her love-laden  
Soul in secret hour  
With music sweet as love, which ———s her bower ;

5. Ah, woful ———,  
Which tells me, Youth's no longer here !  
O Youth ! for years so many and sweet,  
'Tis known that thou and I were one ;

6. A ——— did my spirit seal ;  
I had no human fears.

Answer to Acrostic 145, November number: 'And folds them in for sleep' (Alice Meynell: 'The Lady of the Lambs'). 1. *FoldS* (Tennyson: 'Summer Night'). 2. *OwL* (Keats: 'Ode on Melancholy'). 3. *LiE* (Shakespeare: 'As You Like It'). 4. *DiE* (Christina Rossetti: 'Is it well with the Child?'). 5. *SleeP* (Coleridge: 'Ancient Mariner').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Miss Bell, Gowthams, Gunby, Lincs., and The Rev. Edward Koch, Forty Hill, Enfield, who are invited to choose books to the value of £1 from John Murray's catalogue.

